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English Men of Action

HENRY THE FIFTH

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HENRY THE FIFTH

From a Picture in the possession of Queen's College, Oxford.

HENRY THE FIFTH

BY

THE REV. A. J. CHURCH

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CHAPTER I

THE BOYHOOD OF HENRY

HENRY was born in the castle of Monmouth on August 9th, 1387. He was the eldest of the six children of Henry of Lancaster by Mary de Bohun, younger daughter and co-heiress of Humphrey de Bohun.[1] Humphrey, as the last male descendant of the De Bohuns, united in himself the dignities and estates of the Earls of Hereford, Northampton, and Essex. The elder daughter, Eleanor, was married to Thomas of Woodstock, youngest son of Edward the Third. Eleanor's husband hoped to secure the whole of the Hereford estates, amounting, it is said, to fifty thousand nobles of annual income (not less, it may be calculated, than two hundred thousand pounds of money at its present value). He took charge of his sister-in-law, and had her carefully instructed in theology, intending that she should take

[1] Henry's brothers and sisters were (1) Thomas, Duke of Clarence, born 1389, killed at Baugé in Anjou, March 22nd, 1421; (2) John, Duke of Bedford, born 1390, died Regent of France at Rouen, September 14th, 1435; (3) Humphrey, born 1391, died, it was commonly supposed by foul means, early in 1447; (4) Blanche, married to Louis, son of Rupert, King of the Romans; (5) Philippa, married to Eric the Thirteenth, King of Denmark.

the veil in a convent of the Sisters of St. Clare. John of Gaunt had other views for her future. He took occasion of his younger brother's absence in France to have her removed to Arundel Castle, where she was very soon afterwards married to his son Henry. She died in 1494 in her twenty-fifth year. She was better educated, it appears, than most of the ladies of her day, and it would seem that some of her taste for books descended to her son. The character of Henry of Lancaster has been variously estimated. He won in his youth a high reputation for enterprise and courage. We find him fighting against the Mahommedans in Barbary in one year, and in the next against the Pagan tribes of Lithuania. His skill in all martial exercises was conspicuously great. But, according to one account, he was so stained with crime that his own father wished him to be put to death. He was a bold and probably an unscrupulous man, whom circumstances exposed to a very strong temptation. The weaknesses and vices of Richard the Second put the throne within his reach. We can easily believe that he really felt himself better qualified to rule than his feeble and capricious cousin, and it is just possible that he may have persuaded himself or been persuaded by others that there was something in his claim of hereditary right to the throne. The power unjustly gained was retained by the methods to which an usurper is commonly driven, by falsehood and by cruelty. Former friends were betrayed—as, for example, the Lollards, who certainly had helped him to the throne—and enemies were ruthlessly crushed. The power thus won and maintained descended to his son in happier circumstances. The younger Henry's title was

not seriously questioned. There was, it is true, a conspiracy against him, but it was not supported by any formidable party in the nation. A great success, won early in his reign, made him the object of popular enthusiasm. At the same time he had the advantage of a singularly attractive exterior: the hereditary beauty of the Plantagenets was conspicuous in him. And he was *felix opportunitate mortis:* he died before the lustre of his achievements and the charm of his personal qualities were dimmed by failure and the corrupting influences that wait on power. It was with him as it would have been with the Black Prince if he had died after Poictiers. Yet, allowing for some differences of a finer organisation, it is not difficult to see some of the main characteristics of the fourth Henry in his more fortunate son.

If tradition may be trusted, the young Henry was a delicate child, and was put out to be nursed at a village near Monmouth. The cradle in which he had lain was long shown as a curiosity at Bristol, and the name of his nurse, Joan Waring, appears in the public accounts, from which we learn that an annuity of twenty pounds was settled upon her after her foster-son's accession to the throne.

The household-book of John of Gaunt gives some interesting glimpses of the lad's education. We have an item of money paid for strings for his harp, and another of four shillings expended on seven books of grammar for his use. The continued weakness of his health may be seen in the payment of a courier who announced to his father the fact of his alarming illness.

He had just entered on his twelfth year when his father was banished. He remained in England, probably

under the care of his grandfather. But John of Gaunt died in the February following his son's banishment, and a few weeks afterwards Henry of Lancaster's estates were seized by the Crown on the ground that he had slandered the King, and was consorting with his enemies abroad. The young Henry accompanied Richard to Ireland, and was sent to the castle of Trim in Meath, the ancient meeting-place of the Irish Parliament. He seems to have been kindly treated, and received the honour of knighthood from the King's hands. He was left behind in Ireland in company with his cousin, the young Duke of Gloucester, when Richard returned to England in July. On August 18th Richard was made prisoner. The young Henry was immediately sent for, and was brought to England in a ship furnished by a citizen of Chester. At Chester he met his father, whom he accompanied to London. On September 29th Richard, who was now in the Tower, signed a deed of abdication: on the 30th Parliament met and declared him to be deposed; and on the same day the Duke of Lancaster was seated on the throne by the Archbishops of Canterbury and York.

Henry is said to have been created Prince of Wales by his father on the day of his coronation. At least we find him in possession of that dignity a fortnight afterwards, when the King grants to his "most dear eldest son Henry, Prince of Wales, Duke of Cornwall, and Earl of Chester, the custody and rights of all lands of heirs under age in the principality of Wales and the counties of Chester and Flynt," and also orders him to be put in possession of the revenues of the duchy of Cornwall. The Council also had to consider where he

should reside, and what establishment should be kept up for him.

Before long negotiations were entered upon for his marriage. Towards the end of the year a mission was sent to the King of France, proposing in general terms alliances between the two royal families. The proposal was rejected contemptuously. The King of France knew of no King of England but his son-in-law Richard. Before many weeks were past, Richard was dead—by what means it does not belong to our present purpose to inquire—leaving a virgin widow, Isabella of Valois. Isabella, eldest of the five daughters of Charles the Sixth of France and Isabeau of Bavaria, was then in her thirteenth year. She had all the beauty of her race, and would be a richly-dowered bride. Henry lost no time in asking her hand for his eldest son. The demand was not welcome either to the French Court, which was not disposed to recognise Henry's title, or to the young lady herself, who seems to have cherished a fond recollection of her husband. It was renewed more than once with the same ill-success. Henry was afterwards to win for himself by a very rough wooing a bride of the same house, the youngest of Isabella's sisters.

If we are to believe a local tradition, the young Henry studied for a time at Queen's College, Oxford, under the care of his uncle Henry, afterwards Cardinal Beaufort, whom we know to have been Chancellor of the University during the two years 1397-8. The Chancellor was then a resident officer, performing the functions now delegated to the Vice-Chancellor.

Queen's College had been founded in 1341 by Robert Eglesfield under the auspices of Philippa, Queen of

Edward the Third, and might therefore be considered a specially appropriate residence for princes of the Plantagenet line. A room in the college over the gateway that fronts St. Edmund's Hall was long shown as having been occupied by Prince Henry. His portrait was to be seen painted on the glass of the window, while an inscription in Latin recorded (it disappeared with the gateway early in the last century) the fact that "Henry V, conqueror of his enemies and of himself, was once the great inhabitant of this little chamber." This glass is now in the upper library. It is difficult to estimate the precise value of such a tradition. There is no documentary evidence to confirm it; on the other hand, it is not intrinsically unlikely. Henry had some of the tastes of a student. This fact and the academical standing of his uncle might have suggested a residence at Oxford as a useful way of employing some of his time. Such a residence, if it ever took place, must be assigned to some time between October 1399 and March 1400-1. At the latter date he had begun to take a part in public affairs, for we find on March 10th, 1400-1, that King Henry grants, "on the supplication of his most dear son, the Prince of Wales," a pardon to all the rebels of four counties of North Wales, with three exceptions, of whom Owen Glendower is one. Thenceforth his name occurs, as will be seen, continuously in the State documents of the time.

CHAPTER II

PRINCE HENRY AND PRINCE HAL [1]

He who would draw a portrait of Prince Henry finds himself anticipated by the work of a master hand, a work done in colours so fresh and vivid, and with outlines so firm, that rivalry is hopeless. Shakespeare's "Prince Hal," the reckless, brilliant lad, now bandying jests with bullies and sots in city taverns, now leading his troops to victory on the field of Shrewsbury, is one of those creations of genius which, be they true to history or untrue, never lose their hold on the minds of men. No sober description of the actual Henry, however accurately worked out of authentic details, can possibly supersede the figure which the great dramatist has made immortal.

[1] I have to express my special obligations to a pamphlet by Mr. F. Solly-Flood, Q.C., reprinted from the *Transactions* of the Royal Historical Society. It bears the title of *The Story of Prince Henry of Monmouth and Chief-Justice Gascoign*, but it discusses fully the whole question of Henry's character in early life. I am also greatly indebted to the able account of Henry's campaigns which is to be found in Mr. H. R. Clinton's *From Crécy to Assye*. Finally I must thank the Provost of Queen's College, Oxford, for his courtesy in communicating to me some interesting information about Henry's supposed residence at Oxford, and Major Servanté, R.M., for his courtesy in guiding me on a visit which I paid to the field of Agincourt.

If I may borrow an illustration from literature, it is here as it is with Pope and the rival translators of Homer. Nothing could be more unlike the real *Iliad* than the polished epigrammatic rhetoric of Pope's version, yet it is so masterly a work, so splendid in style, so magnificent in versification that it is the despair of the most scholarly and the most faithful translators; whatever the learned may say, the world still reads "Pope's Homer." So the world will always think of Henry in his youth as the Prince Hal who spoils Falstaff of his ill-gotten booty at Gadshill, laughs at him and with him over his cups in Eastcheap, and soliloquises over his prostrate bulk at Shrewsbury. Many figures in history seem to bring up before us these curious *eidola*, which even the best information cannot wholly banish from our minds. Who can quite dissociate his conception of the first Cyrus from the figure which Xenophon has pourtrayed in his philosophical romance, or forget, when he thinks of Tiberius, the gloomy profligate and tyrant who stands out so vividly from the pages of Tacitus?

The brilliant figure, then, of the first and second parts of *Henry the Fourth* is at least a literary fact. I do not propose to enter on a connected discussion of its authenticity. There are many genuinely historical details which we have about Henry's real personality, and we have at least some suggestions of the source from which the great dramatist drew his materials.

Of course it is easy to take Shakespeare too seriously. Supreme in genius as he was, he was also a playwright, had to do a playwright's work, and descend, if we must say so, to a playwright's arts. His audience had to be amused; and certainly no audience was ever better

amused than were the pit and the galleries of the Globe by Prince Hal and Falstaff. The slender, graceful youth, with gay dress and plumed and jewelled cap, was the happiest foil to the huge "man mountain," with his untrussed hose and wine-stained doublet. The fancy, too, of the people was caught by the notion of this young heir to the crown drinking sherry-sack, as might any one of themselves, in an Eastcheap tavern. It was an excellent jest, with just a spice of romance in it, less familiar also than the manners of some of our heir-apparents since that time have made it. Shakespeare never could have dreamt that he was raising a grave question for historians to quarrel over.

The fact is that the great dramatist, whose genius was never more signally shown than in transmuting other men's lead into gold, found a play, dull enough in itself, which he fashioned into that masterpiece of humour, the comedy of *Henry the Fourth*. *The Famous Victories of Henry the Fifth* was possibly written by William Tarleton, a comedian who flourished in Elizabeth's reign. It is known that he acted in it, taking the part of Sir John Oldcastle. Of the real Oldcastle it is sufficient here to say that he was a man of lofty morality, who witnessed to his convictions by his death. In Tarleton's play—if it be his—he is a vicious buffoon and thief. He goes by the name of "Jockey," and he has two companions of similar character, who are known as "Ned" and "Tom." These are represented as the Prince's associates. And to mark more distinctly the true object of the play, which certainly was to bring the Puritans into ridicule, the other and principal character is one Dericks, a name borne by one of the Marian martyrs. This play was first

acted before 1588, Tarleton dying in that year, and it was the play which Shakespeare adapted. But an English audience would be far less disposed to relish jests upon Protestant martyrs after the Armada and the Papist conspiracies of Elizabeth's latter days, and Shakespeare made a change to suit the altered taste of the day. Oldcastle and Dericks disappear: they are replaced, we may say, by Falstaff and Bardolf. Both were historical personages, and Shakespeare does them as much injustice as his predecessor had done to the Lollard martyr. Bardolf went more than once as ambassador to France in Henry the Fourth's reign, and in the time of his successor he was Lieutenant of Calais. Sir John Falstaff was a Knight of the Garter, a general of distinction, and a man of undoubted honour. There is not a shadow of reason for connecting either Bardolf or Falstaff with any disreputable proceedings. Shakespeare seems to have taken their names absolutely at random.

In the first part of *Henry the Fourth*, then, we see the Prince associating with boon companions, and spending his days in riot, until he is recalled to serious thoughts by his mission to take high command in the army which his father is sending against the rebels in the north and west; and finally doing away with the discredit that had fastened itself on his good name by his gallant behaviour on the field of Shrewsbury. Now let us examine the facts.

First, the situation may be briefly described. Henry the Fourth was far from being safe on his newly won throne. Early in 1400 he had discovered a plot against his life. The Kings of France and Scotland had refused to recognise his title to the crown, and were even making pre-

parations for an invasion of England. A more immediate danger also threatened him; Wales was in revolt. Here Owen Glendower, lineal descendant of the Llewellyn who had been defeated and slain by Edward the First, had been roused by private wrongs to assert the independence of his nation. And it was here that we find the young Henry employed by his father. That a boy so young—in the early part of 1400-1 he still wanted some months of completing his fourteenth year—should be put in a position of authority is remarkable; that the boy so trusted should have been a profligate simply exceeds belief.

The young Prince was apparently taking an active part in the conduct of affairs; in any case, he must have been on the spot, and not wasting his time in London. He was summoned to attend a Council to be held in London on August 15th, 1401. A month afterwards the rebellion in Wales broke out afresh, and the Prince was probably again engaged in active service. At least we find him in November with a small force of twenty men-at-arms and forty archers, in respect of which he received, by order of Council, the sum of one thousand pounds. In the following year we find him acting on his own account. He addresses (under date May 15th) a letter to the Privy Council, in which he gives an account of his doings in Wales. Owen Glendower, it seems, had sent him something like a challenge. He had gone, accordingly, to Owen's principal mansion, but had found no one there. Thence he had proceeded to the Welshman's seat at Glendourdy, and had burnt it, capturing at the same time one of Owen's chief men. The prisoner had offered five hundred pounds for his ransom, but this was not accepted, and he was put to death. Henry had afterwards

marched into Merionethshire and Powysland. This letter was written from Shrewsbury, and was followed by another about a fortnight later, in which he describes himself as being in great straits. His soldiers wanted to know when they would be paid; unless he had some money sent, he could not remain where he was; he had already pawned his jewels (*nos petitz joualx*). The castles of Harlech and Lampadern must be relieved without delay. But if help were given, things promised well for a suppression of the rebellion.

What reply the Prince received to these representations we do not know. The rebellion was not suppressed then, nor for many years to come. On June 25th something like a general levy was ordered, the King addressing precepts to the Lieutenants of many English counties by which it was enjoined that all persons liable to military service should meet him at Lichfield and march with him against the Welsh rebels. Similar documents were issued later in the year, in one of which all persons liable to serve in the counties of Derby and Shropshire were enjoined to meet "our very dear son, Henry, Prince of Wales" at Chester on August 27th.

It is needless to follow the King's proceedings in detail. His resources were not equal to the demands made upon them. New dangers started up in unexpected places, and he had to change his plans to meet them. But on March 7th, 1403, we come to an important document. It is an ordinance of the King in Council, given at Westminster. The beginning of it runs thus:

"The King to all whom it may concern, greeting. Know that, wishing to provide for the good government of the region

of Wales, and of the Marches and parts adjacent thereto, and for resistance to the rebels who have contrary to their allegiance treasonably risen against us, and having full confidence in the fidelity and energy of our dearly beloved eldest son, Henry, Prince of Wales, we constitute the said Prince our Lieutenant in the said region of Wales."

Here then we find Henry, who was now about halfway through his sixteenth year, appointed to the civil and military command of the most disturbed part of the King's dominions. About six weeks later the men of Shropshire write to the Council complaining of the ravages of the Welsh rebels, and praying that some men-at-arms and archers should be sent to protect them till the Prince himself should come.

The King had now to meet a more formidable combination of enemies than he had yet encountered. Henry Percy, eldest son of the Earl of Northumberland, the Harry Hotspur of Shakespeare, had been a trusted lieutenant of Henry. He had served in Wales against Glendower, and had been employed both in negotiations with the Scotch and in military action against them. He conceived himself to have been unjustly treated, for reasons which do not concern our present purpose, and to avenge his wrongs he formed an alliance with Owen Glendower and with the Earl of Douglas on behalf of the King of Scotland. Glendower was to invade Gloucestershire. To meet this danger the King issued briefs, under date of June 16th, to the Lieutenants of Gloucestershire, Shropshire, Worcestershire, and Herefordshire, directing that all persons liable to serve should put themselves at the command of his son, Henry, Prince of Wales. At the same time an attack on the northern

borders was threatened from Scotland, and the Percies, whose disaffection was not yet known at Court, were commissioned to repel it. The King himself marched northwards to assist them, and seems to have been ignorant as late as July 10th of their real intentions. These, however, became known to him a day or so after, for he issued briefs to the Lieutenants of the counties, dated from Burton-on-Trent on July 16th, Lichfield on the 17th, and Westminster on the 18th, requiring military assistance to repel the invasion of Henry Percy with the Welsh rebels and "certain enemies of ours from Scotland" in his company.

Six days later than the date of the Westminster brief the battle of Shrewsbury was fought. Prince Henry was on the field and bore himself bravely, though we must not credit him with the great achievement which Shakespeare attributes to him, of having slain Henry Percy in single combat. A lad, still wanting some months of sixteen, could hardly have vanquished a man of thirty, one of the bravest and most expert soldiers of his time. Hotspur seems to have been killed by a chance arrow as he was charging with characteristic impetuosity the royal forces. The young Prince was himself wounded in the forehead by an arrow.

His father's confidence in him was continued. Two days after the battle he expresses his trust in the loyalty and prudent caution of his son, Henry, Prince of Wales, and gives him full power to amnesty at his discretion such persons concerned in the late rebellion as he might think fit, in the county of Chester and in other places named.

Owen Glendower, who had not shared the defeat of

the Percies at Shrewsbury, still held out. In 1404 he assumed the title of Prince of Wales. In the June of that year the Sheriff of Hereford, with various gentlemen of the county, represented to the King that they were suffering greatly from the ravages of the Welsh rebels. The Prince was directed to go to their help, and on the 20th of the month wrote to his father from Worcester, to which city he had removed his headquarters. He thanks him for his kind letter written from Pontefract five days before, and rejoices in the news it brought of his health and prosperity, which are, he says, the greatest pleasure that can come to him in the world. He had been taking measures for the defence of the county of Hereford, which the Welsh rebels had been ravaging with fire and sword, and he would do all he could to resist them and to save England from their attacks. Another letter to the same effect was addressed by him to the Council, and a second four days afterwards.

On August 30th the Council granted him three thousand marks for the expenses of holding the castle of Denbigh and other strongholds in North Wales, and suggested that he should remain for a certain time on the borders of Herefordshire, and afterwards invade Wales. In a document apparently belonging to the same time there is a list of castles in North Wales which the Prince had kept at his own cost since the commencement of the rebellion.

In March 1405 the Prince wrote to the King relating a victory which he had won over the Welsh:

"On Wednesday, the 11th day of this present month of March, the rebels in parties from Glamorgan, Morganoc, Usk, Netherwart, and Overwart were assembled to the number of

eleven thousand by their own account. On the said 11th of March they burnt part of your town of Grosmont. Thereupon I sent my dear cousin Lord Talbot and others. To them there joined themselves your faithful and valiant knights, William Newport and John Greindel. And though they were but a small number, yet was it well seen that the victory is not in the multitude of the people but in the power of God. . . . By the aid of the Blessed Trinity your people held the field of battle and vanquished the said rebels, and slew of them, by one account eight hundred, since said one thousand. . . . No prisoners were taken save one, a great knight, whom I would have sent to you but that he cannot yet comfortably ride. . . . I pray God to keep you always in joy and honour, and to grant me that I may soon comfort you with other good news."

In this year by prompt action, and still more by skilful diplomacy, the King crushed a formidable insurrection that threatened his power in the north. After executing the chiefs of the rising—Scrope, Archbishop of York, and Mowbray, Earl Marshall—he turned his attention to Wales. If he could crush Glendower he had practically rid himself of his enemies, for he held in his power the heir to the Scottish throne. With his father's action in the north the Prince could have had nothing to do; but we may be sure that he took a part in the Welsh campaign. Large as was the force which Henry brought into the field, little or nothing was accomplished. The Welshmen were driven from the plain country; but they could not be touched in their mountain fastnesses. Indeed the weather was so exceptionally bad that Glendower was believed to have secured the aid of this powerful ally by his magical arts. Early in the autumn the King returned to London, disbanding at the same time the greater part of his forces, and leaving the

command of operations, as before, in the hands of the Prince of Wales.

It would be tedious to give all the details of Henry's proceedings that may be found in the public documents of the time. On the whole, we get from these sources the picture of a vigorous young prince, who must of course have been assisted by older counsellors, but who was not a mere puppet in their hands. He is making head to the best of his abilities and means against a formidable rebellion. He is much hampered by want of money, and the King and the Council try to help him. As time goes on, more means and more power are put into his hands. King, Privy Council, and Parliament seem to be agreed in trusting him. The King does not think it necessary to visit in person the region which he had put into his son's charge. More than once, after proclaiming his purpose to take the field himself against the Welsh rebels, he changes his mind, and goes elsewhere. The Council accept without hesitation his recommendation of the Prince and his affairs to their care. When Parliament is sitting, it votes him money for the purposes of his campaigns.

The proceedings, however, in the first half of 1406 are so important as bearing on the position of the Prince that they must be specially mentioned. At some time in March or April the Privy Council held a meeting, at which the succession of the Prince of Wales to the throne was considered, as was also the subject of his lieutenancy in Wales, and of his power to amnesty rebels who might give in their submission. About the same time the House of Commons sent up an address to the King, praying him to thank the Prince for

his diligence in the government of Wales, to which, it will be remembered, he had been appointed three years before. This address is dated April 3rd. Two days afterwards the King renewed the appointment of the Prince as Lieutenant of Wales till November 11th. Special authority was conferred upon him to admit rebels to grace on such terms as might approve themselves to him and his counsellors. Before the period thus specified had expired—*i.e.*, on September 27th—provision was made for a further tenure of his office.

In the interval between April and September the King's health had begun to fail so seriously that the question of settling the succession became urgent. On April 26th he addressed two letters from Windsor to the Council. In the first—written, it would seem, early in the day—he tells them that he should not be able to fulfil his purpose of being at Westminster on that day. Some ailment had attacked his leg, and he was also suffering seriously from ague. Consequently his physicians considered that it would be dangerous for him to travel on horseback. However, he intended to be at Staines that night; from Staines he would journey by water to London, where he hoped to be in the course of three or four days. The second letter was written later in the day. By that time his illness had so much increased that he had to give up altogether the idea of travelling. The Council would have to go on with public business without him. On June 7th the House of Commons voted an address of thanks to the Prince, which was to be forwarded to him in Wales. At the same time Parliament passed an Act declaring that the succession to the throne was in the Prince of Wales and

the heirs-male of his body lawfully begotten; and failing these, to the other sons of the King and their heirs in succession. Six months later this was amended by another Act, which abolished the restriction to heirs-male. This was done, of course, from considerations of general policy, but it indicates a feeling of confidence in the Prince.

The proclamation of this Act bears date December 22nd. Before this time the Prince had come to London, and this is positively the first time that we have an intimation of his presence in the capital. His name appears on the list of the persons attending the meeting of the Privy Council in the afternoon of December 8th; but it is absent from a list dated November 27th, and the Prince must therefore have been sworn in between the two dates. He was present again at a meeting held on January 30th, when the Great Seal was resigned by Thomas Langley, Bishop of Durham, and handed to Thomas Arundel, Archbishop of Canterbury. How much longer his visit to London lasted, we cannot say. Probably he returned to the scene of his government when the season for action in the field came on. At any rate by the early autumn of the year he had gained considerable successes, having received the submission of three chiefs, an event which was evidently thought to be of considerable importance.

In a brief session of Parliament during the same year (October 20th to November 21st) the Prince again received public thanks. A little later in the year the King granted him certain property which had been forfeited by the outlawry of sundry persons; and also reappointed him, for the fourth time, his Lieutenant in

Wales. He had now, it will be remembered, completed his twentieth year. The Welsh appointment was twice more renewed—on December 27th, 1407, and again on January 19th, 1409-10. Probably there would have been an impropriety, now that the Prince had attained years of maturity, in handing over to any one else the chief command in the principality from which he took his title. But he seems to have had personally little to do with Welsh affairs during the latter part of his father's reign. The last record of his presence in the country is a document, executed at Carmarthen Castle, and bearing date September 23rd, 1408. At that time he had been five years and a half in command. He had been so far unsuccessful in dealing with the Welsh insurrection that Owen Glendower still held out, as indeed he continued to do up to the day of his death. But the rebels or patriots, according as we may choose to call them, were certainly confined within narrow limits. The Welsh difficulty was no longer, as it had been in the days before the battle of Shrewsbury, a danger that threatened the throne of the Lancastrian princes; it had ceased to be even a serious annoyance. Glendower still remained unsubdued in his mountain fastnesses; but the rich plains of Herefordshire and Worcestershire were no longer in fear of his incursions. So the Prince's Welsh campaigns were a success rather than, as is commonly stated by historians, a failure. How much of this success was due to his personal initiative it is, of course, impossible to say. When he was first formally appointed to his office he was just nine months younger than was the Black Prince at Crecy. Lads between fifteen and sixteen are now-a-

days considered too young even for the responsibilities of a sixth form in a public school. In the England of Edward and Henry's time men came much earlier to their maturity. The royal caste especially, accustomed from the very first to the realities of power, learnt very soon to act for themselves. The young Prince is probably entitled to a very considerable share of whatever credit may attach during the time of his active lieutenancy to the management of Welsh affairs.

CHAPTER III

PRINCE HENRY AND THE CHIEF JUSTICE

THE first part of Henry's public life, the period of his lieutenancy of Wales and the Welsh border, has now been dealt with. We may pass on to the second, which may be roughly described as extending from the beginning of 1409 up to his accession to the throne. On February 28th, 1408-9, he was appointed Constable of Dover Castle and Keeper of the Cinque Ports. After this we find no mention of his personal presence in Wales, though, as has been mentioned, he continued to hold the office of Lieutenant of that principality. He seems to have resided chiefly in London or at the seat of his new duties. This, then, seems a convenient opportunity of discussing the famous story of his insolent behaviour to the Chief Justice, his punishment, and his submission. Shakespeare, indeed, would seem to place the incident in the first period of the Prince's life. In the first act of the second part of *Henry the Fourth*, Falstaff's page says to his master, when the Chief Justice enters, "Here comes the nobleman who committed the Prince for striking him about Bardolph." This, therefore, puts it back to some time before the battle of Shrewsbury, which, it will be remembered, is supposed to have been fought just before

the beginning of the second drama. This is manifestly impossible. If there were nothing else to disprove it—and the Prince's age, barely fifteen, would be itself sufficient—there is the fact that he resided continuously in Wales. The incident, if it be a fact, must be assigned to the time when Henry was living in or near London.

We may notice, before proceeding, the curious carelessness in the great dramatist which makes the Prince strike the Chief Justice "about Bardolph." Bardolph is one of the boon companions of Falstaff. The Prince never expresses anything but contempt for him.

A few lines from the famous scene may be quoted. The King, then newly seated on the throne, asks the Chief Justice, who has come to offer his homage,

> "How might a prince of my great hopes forget
> So great indignities you laid upon me?
> What! rate, rebuke, and roughly send to prison
> The immediate heir of England!"

And then, after hearing the defence, he goes on:

> "You are right, justice, and you weigh this well;
> Therefore still bear the balance and the sword:
> And I do wish your honours may increase,
> Till you do live to see a son of mine
> Offend you and obey you, as I did.
> So shall I live to speak my father's words:
> *Happy am I, that have a man so bold,*
> *That dares do justice on my proper son;*
> *And not less happy, having such a son,*
> *That would deliver up his greatness so*
> *Into the hands of justice.*"

No more picturesque incident, it must be allowed, has ever been used to "point a moral or adorn a tale." We cannot wonder that it has become one of the common-

places of history, or of what passes as history. What, then, is the foundation of the story; or, if it has no foundation, what is its origin?

It appears for the first time in *The Boke named the Governour* of Sir Thomas Elyot, a philosophico-political treatise, published in 1531. The story as he tells it runs thus:

"The most renowned Prince, King Henry the Fifth, late King of England, during the life of his father was noted to be fierce and of wanton courage. It happened that one of his servants whom he well favoured, for felony by him committed, was arraigned at the King's Bench; whereof he being advertised, and incensed by light persons about him, in furious rage came hastily to the bar, where his servant stood as a prisoner, and commanded him to be ungyved and set at liberty, whereat all men were abashed, except the Chief Justice, who humbly exhorted the Prince to be contented that his servant might be ordered according to the ancient laws of the realm, or if he would have him saved from the rigour of the laws, that he should obtain, if he might, of the King, his father, his gracious pardon; whereby no law or justice should be derogate. With which answer the Prince nothing appeased, but rather more inflamed, endeavoured himself to take away his servant. The judge, considering the perilous example and inconvenience that might thereby ensue, with a valiant spirit and courage commanded the Prince upon his allegiance to leave the prisoner and depart his way. With which commandment the Prince, being set all in a fury, all chafed, and in a terrible manner, came up to the place of judgment—men thinking that he would have slain the judge, or have done to him some damage; but the judge sitting still, without moving, declaring the majesty of the King's place of judgment, and with an assured and bold countenance made to the Prince these words following:—'Sir, remember yourself; I keep here the place of the King, your sovereign lord and father, to whom ye owe double obedience, wherefore, eftsoons in his

name, I charge you desist of your wilfulness and unlawful entry here, and from henceforth give good example to those which hereafter shall be your proper subjects. And now for your contempt and disobedience go you to the prison of the King's Bench, whereunto I commit you; and remain ye there prisoner until the pleasure of the King, your father, be further known.' With which words being abashed, and also wondering at the marvellous gravity of that worshipful Justice, the noble Prince, laying his weapon apart, doing reverence, departed and went to the King's Bench, as he was commanded. Whereat his servants disdaining, came and showed to the King all the whole affair. Whereat he awhile studying, after as a man all ravished with gladness, holding his eyes and hands up towards heaven, abraided, saying with a loud voice, 'O merciful God, how much am I, above all other men, bound to your infinite goodness; specially for that ye have given me a judge who feareth not to minister justice, and also a son who can suffer semblably and obey justice?'"

This narrative is circumstantial enough, though it gives no note of time. On what foundation, then, does it rest, for we can hardly suppose it to be a pure invention? There certainly appears to have been a tradition which attributes some such misconduct to the Prince. Some few years after the appearance of Sir Thomas Elyot's book, one Robert Redman or Redmayne wrote a book which he entitled *Historia Henrici Quinti.* He thus expresses himself:

"He was removed from the Council (*Senatus*), and access to the Court was forbidden to him. His reputation was checked in mid-course, because he struck the Chief Justice, whose function it was to solve suits and decide causes, when the said Justice had committed to prison one from whose companionship Henry derived a singular pleasure."

Here the offence is the same, but the punishment is

different. Of the alleged removal of the Prince from the Council it will be more convenient to speak hereafter.

Of Richard Redman we know nothing beyond what may be learnt from the internal evidence of his chronicle, and this amounts to little more than that he was a scholar well versed in Latin literature; that he was inclined to the Reformed opinions; and that he wrote somewhat earlier than the middle of the sixteenth century. It seems, however, that there was a Redman who was present at the battle of Agincourt, and who on one occasion was joined in a commission with Gascoigne, the hero of the story. It has been suggested that this Redman was an ancestor of the chronicler, and that he derived his story from a tradition current in his family. Of this we can only say that it is not impossible, not forgetting, however, that such a tradition may indeed have existed and yet not have been true.

Finally, Thomas Hardyng tells us that the punishment of removal from the Council was inflicted upon the Prince by the King, but does not mention the offence which was thus visited. Hardyng was a contemporary; indeed, as he was born 1378, he was very nearly of the same age as Henry. So far his testimony is valuable, though his account of the incident seems to have been written quite late in life. But, as the Prince's offence is not specified, it has but a very indirect bearing on the question.

On the other hand, an examination of the records of the Court of the King's Bench shows that there is no entry to be found in them of any committal of the Prince. It has been pointed out that the summary committal to prison of an offender, as described by Elyot,

was not the course of proceeding at the time. This, however, may be waived. The Prince may have been tried by a jury impanelled on the spot, and sent to prison when found guilty by them; and for this course of proceeding a more dramatically effective committal by the presiding judge may have been substituted. But the incident must, one would think, have been recorded in one way or another, and the absolute silence of the rolls and year-books of the Court affords a strong presumption that nothing of the kind ever occurred.

But on looking back to the records of an earlier time, we find that on one occasion a Prince of Wales had been guilty of contempt of Court and had been punished for it by his father. In the thirty-fourth year of Edward the First, one William de Breora, having had judgment pronounced against him by Roger de Hegham, one of the Barons of the Exchequer, "climbed in contemptuous fashion upon the bar, and with grave and bitter words found fault with the said judgment and also insulted the said Roger as he was leaving the Court." The Court proceeded to punish him for this offence, and rested its action on what had recently been done in a similar case.

"Such acts," it says, "namely, contempt and disobedience done to the servants of our Lord King, as to the King himself and his Court, are exceedingly odious. This was lately manifested when the said King removed his eldest and dearly beloved son, Edward, Prince of Wales, from his house for nearly the space of half-a-year, because he had spoken gross and bitter words to a servant of the King; nor would he suffer him to come into his presence till he had satisfied the aforesaid servant of the King in the matter of his offence."

There can, I think, be little doubt that we have here

the germs of the story which Shakespeare afterwards so effectively used. It has been acutely pointed out that several phrases in Elyot's narrative have the appearance of having been translated from the Latin; and the theory is that some chronicler compounded the various incidents as they had occurred or were supposed to have occurred, and combined them with the story which is told in the *Governour*, and which has been immortalised by Shakespeare. It should, perhaps, be added that Gascoigne had shown in a very striking way his independence of spirit. After the suppression of the northern insurrection in 1405, the King directed him to pronounce sentence of death on the two leaders, Richard Scrope, Archbishop of York, and Thomas Mowbray, Earl Marshall, who had been captured and probably tried and condemned by some kind of court-martial. Gascoigne, who was Chief Justice (he had been appointed to the office in November 1400), refused to do so. He declared that as to the Archbishop, neither the King nor any of the King's subjects could lawfully put him to death; as to the Earl Marshall, he had the right to be tried by his peers. Independence in a judge has always been especially dear to Englishmen. To a monkish historian—and almost all the historians of the time were monks—such independence could not show itself in a more praiseworthy fashion than in asserting the exemption of ecclesiastical persons from the jurisdiction of lay courts. Gascoigne, then, would be a genuine hero, and, as with other genuine heroes, a great amount of myth may well have grown up about his true story.

It only remains to examine the conclusion of the legend, as Shakespeare tells it. The young King is there

represented as assuring him of his favour, and promising to continue him in office.

We find him acting as a judge in Hilary term 1413 (January and February). Henry the Fourth died on March 20th. His successor summoned a new Parliament by writ bearing date the 23rd day of that month, and among the persons summoned was William Gascoigne. But on March 29th William Hankford, a puisne judge of the Common Pleas, was appointed to Gascoigne's office. On July 7th of the same year there is recorded a payment made to him, as late Chief Justice, on account of salary and annuity. It is quite possible that he voluntarily resigned his office. We do not exactly know his age, but he must have been advanced in years. He had been practising as an advocate as early as the year 1374, which may well throw back his birth as far as 1340. In this case he would be seventy-three at Henry's accession, and seventy-three meant much more then than it does now. He died in 1419. It may be mentioned that in 1414 a royal warrant gave him for life four bucks and four does out of the forest of Pontefract. On the whole, the evidence in the matter has an absolutely neutral effect. It disproves, indeed, anything like a display of magnanimity on Henry's part; but then there does not seem to have been any occasion for such magnanimity. Gascoigne may have been removed from his office, a common enough practice in the days when such offices were held at the royal pleasure, or he may have resigned. That he was continued in his office by the young King is certainly a fiction. There can be little doubt that the same may be said of the whole story.

CHAPTER IV

THE CHARGES AGAINST PRINCE HENRY

THE appointment of the Prince in February 1408-9 to the office of Constable of Dover and Keeper of the Cinque Ports has already been mentioned. A little more than a year afterwards—that is, on March 18th, 1409-10—the King, having the "fullest confidence in the circumspection and fidelity of his most dear son, Henry, Prince of Wales," appointed him for the space of twelve years Captain of the town of Calais. Thenceforward his time was divided between his duties at these places and in London, where he is found in frequent attendance at Councils. In the Acts of the Privy Council and other records there is preserved a continuous history of his public life. The details are of little or no importance; but the impression left by the whole is that the Prince was taking a leading part in the administration of affairs, foreign and domestic. The theory of the Constitution, as it is now understood and carried into practice, excludes the possibility of any such action on the part of the heir-apparent to the throne. The system on which the machine is worked is a government by party, and from party it is held to be necessary that he should stand aloof. The Sovereign, though the powers assigned to him

by the Constitution have virtually fallen into abeyance, still has a very considerable share in the management of affairs; but the functions of the Prince of Wales are purely social. Things were very different in the days of personal government. The King's Ministers were not the representatives of the majority in Parliament, but friends and counsellors of his own choice, often, of course, his own kinsmen. Edward the First had been the support of his feeble father, and the Third Edward had had an able lieutenant in the Black Prince. All that is recorded in authentic documents about Prince Henry tends to make us believe that his behaviour as successor to the crown resembled that of those great predecessors in his place. There is nothing, on the other hand, to suggest a comparison with the dissolute heir of the first Edward, whose frivolous conduct and unseemly intimacies have nevertheless, by some strange caprice of tradition, been transferred to our hero.

It will be sufficient to give a few only of the many occasions on which the Prince's name is mentioned. It will be seen that they indicate, more or less plainly, the confidence and affection existing between him and his father.

To be in command both at Dover and Calais, while still retaining the lieutenantship of Wales, was manifestly to be in a position of great trust. Not less significant in another way was his appointment (dated February 1st, 1408-9) as guardian of the young Earl of March and his brother, two most important persons as representing a rival claim to the throne. The general opinion of his character may be indicated by the fact that when, in compliance with a request from the Commons, the Lords

before appointed to be of the King's Council were again declared, all of them took the oath to do justice excepting the Prince of Wales, who for his rank was excused that ceremony.

In the course of the year 1411 we find grants of money made to the Prince for operations to be carried on at Calais and for the defence of Wales. In the October of that year the King makes him a present of twenty hogsheads of red wine from Gascony. It should be mentioned that in the previous year he had received from the King a grant for life of the palace of Coldharbour, in the parish of Hayes in Middlesex.

On November 2nd in this year Parliament met and sat for six weeks. In the course of the session the Speaker, in the name of the Commons, prayed the King to thank the Prince and the other Lords of the Council for their great labour and diligence, and declared the opinion of the House that the said Lords had done their duty, according to their promise, well and loyally. The Prince and his colleagues were present, and kneeling declared by the mouth of the Prince that they had endeavoured so to act. Thereupon the King thanked them. On the last day of the Parliament the Speaker recommended the Queen, the Prince, and the King's younger son to the King, and asked for the advancement of their estates. To this recommendation the King returned the usual gracious answer.

There is nothing particularly remarkable in these proceedings; but they indicate the existence of harmony and good feeling between the King, his heir, and the House of Commons, and there is certainly nothing to support the allegations that have now to be considered.

In a chronicle the date of which cannot be fixed, but which was certainly not contemporary with the events which it professes to narrate, it is stated that in the Parliament of 1411 the Prince desired of the King that he should resign the kingdom, as being incapable by reason of ill-health of performing its duties, that the King refused to do so, and that thereupon the Prince and his counsellors withdrew from the Parliament.

In another chronicle, also of uncertain date, written by a monk of the Abbey of Malmsbury, it is stated that in the thirteenth year of King Henry the Fourth "a convention was made between Henry Beaufort, Bishop of Winchester, and almost all the Lords that one of them should speak to the King, desiring that he should resign the crown and permit his eldest son to be crowned, seeing that he was so horribly afflicted by leprosy; and that this being told to the King, he, being unwilling so to resign his crown, by the advice of some of his Lords rode through a great part of England, notwithstanding the said leprosy."

All the historical confirmation of this allegation that exists lies in the fact that sixteen years afterwards the Bishop, being on his trial for high treason, was accused of having stirred up the King, when Prince of Wales, to endeavour to bring about the resignation of his father. No evidence was offered in support of the charge, and the Bishop was acquitted. This acquittal is not a conclusive proof of the prelate's innocence, for the trial was a political move on the part of the faction opposed to him, and the result would naturally follow the event of the struggle. The charge must have represented some kind of popular belief. It is probable,

or at least not impossible, that at some time during these two years of Henry the Fourth's life there was a feeling that the functions of government were not efficiently performed by him, and that they might with advantage be handed over to his heir. The Prince may have shared this feeling, but there is nothing to prove that he did. In the absence of all evidence we may conclude that he did not show it by any overt act.

One part of the story is indeed conclusively disproved by testimony that cannot be gainsaid. The King did not ride over a great part of England to show his people that he was not disabled by the leprosy. We know that on June 12th, 1411, he was at the Abbey of Stratford, that he returned thence to his palace at Westminster on that day, and that he was never afterwards absent for a whole day from that residence.

In a proclamation dated February 3rd, 1411-12, the King addresses his heir as "his most dear son, Henry, Prince of Wales." The language is formal; but, so far as it goes, it indicates continued confidence and affection on the part of the King. This, it will be observed, was a few weeks after the session of Parliament in which, as is alleged, the Prince endeavoured to oust his father from power.

One piece of contemporary evidence, however, must not be neglected. Monstrelet writes thus (i. 101):

"He (Henry IV) was so sorely oppressed at the latter end of his sickness, that those who attended him, not perceiving him to breathe, concluded that he was dead, and covered his face with a cloth. It was the custom in that country, whenever the King was ill, to place the royal crown on a cushion beside his bed, and for his successor to take it at his death. The Prince of Wales, being informed by the attendants that his

father was dead, had carried away the crown ; but, shortly after, the King uttered a groan, and his face was uncovered, when, on looking for the crown, he asked what had become of it ? His attendants replied that 'my lord the Prince had taken it away.' He bade them send for the Prince, and, at his entrance, the King asked him why he had carried away the crown. 'My lord,' answered the Prince, 'your attendants here present affirmed to me that you were dead ; and as your crown and kingdom belong to me as your eldest son, after your decease, I had taken it away.' The King gave a deep sigh, and said, 'My fair son, what right have you to it ? for you well know I had none.' 'My lord,' replied the Prince, 'as you have held it by the right of your sword, it is my intent to hold and defend it the same during my life.' The King answered, 'Well, act as you see best ; I leave all things to God, and pray that He will have mercy on me.'"

Shakespeare has used the story for the scene with which every one is familiar ; but he has used it in a different sense from that in which it is told. The dramatist's purpose was to heighten the contrast between the Prince, reckless, selfish, greedy of power, and the King, changed by his elevation into a model of wisdom, thoughtfulness, and moderation. The chronicler, who is manifestly a Yorkist partisan, introduces it to enforce the dying King's supposed confession of his wrongful tenure of the crown. There is no hint of the father charging the son with a greedy grasping at power. Dr. Lingard seems right in suggesting that the story was a fiction of the partisans of the Earl of March. It has a very improbable look, and is supported by nothing that we know of the manner of the King's death.

There remains, however, a certain residuum of evidence which makes it not altogether improbable that during the last year of Henry the Fourth's life there

was some disturbance of the harmony between him and his eldest son.

Thomas Hardyng wrote in 1465 a metrical life of Henry the Fifth, which is known as *Versus Rhythmici in laudem Henrici Quinti.* In this we find the following lines:

> "The King discharged the Prince from his counsail,
> And set my lord Sir Thomas in his stead,
> Chief of the council for the King's more avail;
> For which the Prince, of wrath and wilful head,
> Again him made debate and froward tread,
> With whom the King took part and held the field,
> To time the Prince unto the King him yield."

Hardyng was born in 1378, and he must therefore have been in very advanced age when he wrote his *Versus Rhythmici.* More than half a century, too, had passed since the time of which he was writing. These considerations, however, scarcely impair the value of his testimony. The memory of an old man is commonly tenacious of things that belong to his early life; nor can we, on the other hand, find a probable origin for so circumstantial a story in the fancies of dotage. There is possibly more weight in the argument that there is no mention of any such occurrence in the chronicle which Hardyng wrote some thirty years before the composition of his *Versus Rhythmici.* But the chronicle was written while the house of Lancaster was still in undisputed possession of the throne, and, being doubtless intended for the perusal of Henry the Sixth, who must have been about attaining his majority when it was finished; it is quite possible that the writer may have suppressed the mention of a family quarrel. But in later times he

attached himself to the house of York, and his chronicle is supposed to have been rewritten at the instance of Richard, Duke of York, killed at Wakefield. In 1465 Edward the Fourth was, to all appearance, firmly seated on the throne. Praises of a great national hero, such as was Henry the Fifth, would not be unwelcome; but there would be no motive for tenderness in writing the family history. It must be allowed that, on the whole, Hardyng's testimony has a certain weight.

– Then comes the question—Is it confirmed by any other evidence? There is an entry in the Pell Rolls, under the date February 18th, 1411-12, which records the payment to the Prince of a thousand marks in consideration of the labours, costs, and charges sustained by him "quo tempore fuit de consilio ipsius Domini Regis." The words may mean, according to the sense which we may put on *fuit*, "for the time during which he *has been* of the King's Council" or "for the time during which *he was*," etc. It has been argued that if the latter sense had been intended *erat* would have been used instead of *fuit*. It may be allowed that the signification of *erat* would not have been ambiguous. It would have meant that he was at some former time and was not at the time of writing. But *fuit* may mean the same. It is often used as a most emphatic præterite, as in the famous "*fuimus* Troes, *fuit* Ilium." The Prince, too, it must be remembered, had been a member of the Council at this time for more than eleven years. If he still retained his seat in it, it is somewhat strange that now for the first time the payment of compensation for his expenses and service appears. The first impression left by the entry

certainly is that the thousand marks were a *solacium* paid to him on ceasing to belong to it.[1]

A noticeable omission occurs in a writ issued on June 11th, 1412—that is, about four months after the entry just discussed. The Prince is described, without any affectionate or complimentary epithet, as the "Captain of Calais." It is possible that this omission may have been unintentional: there are instances in which it occurs where it is impossible to suppose that any kind of displeasure or angry feeling is implied; and we certainly find an entry of May 1st in the same year in which the usual terms of affection are employed.

If the Prince was removed from the Council or retired from it voluntarily, his absence cannot have lasted long. His supposed successor or substitute, Thomas, Duke of Clarence, left England to take the command of the English forces in Aquitaine in July 1412, nor did he return to this country till after his father's death. It is noticeable that there is no trace of the resentment which an elder brother unjustly dispossessed might be supposed to feel for him who had supplanted him. Henry, when he became king, retained the Duke of Clarence in his command. In July a Council was held at which the means of raising money for the expenses of the King, and for a force which was apparently about to be got together to serve under the Prince, were discussed. In the September of the same year the Prince, if we may trust the author of the *Chronicle*

[1] I cannot feel satisfied with Mr. F. Solly-Flood's explanation that, owing to the Prince's frequent absences at Calais, his attendance at the Council had been intermittent, and his salary had fallen into arrear. A thousand marks is a large sum, more than a Councillor's salary for many years could amount to.

of London, actually attended a Council. Whether this be the case or no, it is certain that about this time we find the Council deliberating about matters which closely concerned the Prince's character, and coming to a conclusion highly favourable to him. He had been accused, it would seem, of keeping back moneys that he had received for the payment of his soldiers. He had now sent in two rolls of paper, giving particulars of his expenditure, and the Council accordingly directed the issue of letters under the Privy Seal which should set forth the true state of the case. A further order was made at the same sitting of the Council for the payment of a considerable sum of money on account of the wages of certain men-at-arms who were stationed under the Prince's command in Wales. Very similar entries, which it is needless to give, are found under date October 21st.

If, then, there was any disagreement between the King and his eldest son, it must probably be referred to the earlier part of 1412. It is easy to make conjectures about the cause, for indeed several causes are possible or even probable, but difficult to find reasons for preferring one conjecture to another. There may have been the ordinary jealousy that is found so often between the possessor and the heir of power. The elder Henry's capacity may have begun to fail him, as his health certainly failed, during the last years of his life. Dissatisfaction on the side of the vigorous successor to the throne and suspicion on that of its enfeebled holder would naturally follow. And the young Henry may well have felt some personal annoyance at the tortuous policy which his father persisted in following in French affairs. The King made a treaty with the King of

France in December 1410. No sooner was it proclaimed than in the following March he began to negotiate with the Duke of Burgundy, and concluded a truce with him in May. In the following year an alliance, offensive and defensive, was made with the French Princes who were acting on behalf of the then disabled King; and again, a month after this, another treaty was concluded with the Duke of Burgundy. The affairs of the Prince himself were one of the subjects dealt with in these negotiations. Henry the Fourth was eager in the extreme to strengthen his position by a matrimonial alliance with a royal family of undoubted title. It was now a daughter of the French King, and now a daughter of the Duke of Burgundy, who seemed to him a desirable bride for the heir to his crown; and it is just possible that the young man, who was quite capable of being resolute in such matters, did not wholly approve of the diplomacy by which his father sought to dispose of him in marriage.

It is possible that a curious story, previously referred to as bearing on the question of Henry's possible residence at Oxford, may belong to this time of estrangement. It was on a New Year's Day—the New Year's Day of 1411-12, if this conjecture be correct—that the Prince, finding that his enemies had slandered him to his father, came to Westminster Hall. Dressed, according to one version, in his old student's gown, with the needle and thread, still yearly presented to the members of Eglesfield's foundation, stuck in its collar, he advanced, leaving his attendants clustered round the coal fire in the middle of the hall, to the upper end where the King sat with his immediate attendants. Saluting his father

he begged for a private audience, and the King, who was unable to walk, was carried into another room. Then the Prince fell on his knees, and drawing his dagger from its sheath presented it to his father, and begged him to plunge it into his heart if he thought that there could be found there any feelings but those of affection and loyalty. The chronicler Otterbourne tells a somewhat similar story, but refers it to the June of this same year.

Another charge that has been brought against Henry may be traced in the first place to John Stow, whose *Summary of the Chronicles of England* was published in 1570, and through him to Robert Fabyan, whose *Chronicle* was probably written early in the sixteenth century. Stow writes:

"He (the Prince) lived somewhat insolently, insomuch that while his father lived, being accompanied with some of his young lords and gentlemen, he would wait in disguised array for his own receivers and distress them of their money, and sometimes at such enterprises both he and his companions were sorely beaten; and when his receivers made to him their complaints how they were robbed in their coming to him, he would give them their discharge of so much money as they had lost, and besides that they should not depart from him without great rewards for their trouble and vexation, especially they should be rewarded that best had resisted him and his company, and of whom he had received the greatest and most strokes."

Of Fabyan it is only necessary to say that he does not give any such details, but says generally that the "King, before the death of his father, applied himself unto all vice and insolency, and drew unto him violent and wildly-disposed persons."

Stow, therefore, it will be seen, improved upon Fabyan. Recent writers have improved upon Stow by finding a cause for these lawless proceedings in Henry's grinding poverty. Poverty was doubtless the prevailing condition of both father and son; but the King was as liberal to his heir as his means permitted. The Prince had often, it is clear, money enough to advance his soldiers' pay, for we hear of sums repaid him on this account. The story may be dismissed as a fable, or, if it has any foundation at all, as the exaggerated report of a youthful freak.

A still more baseless invention is that the Prince and his wild companions indulged in various extravagant doings at his manor of Cheylesmore, near Coventry, and that on one occasion he and they were taken into custody by the Mayor of Coventry. The legend cannot, it seems, be traced beyond the latter part of the seventeenth century.

The other charges against Henry's character may be more conveniently considered in the next chapter.

CHAPTER V

ACCESSION TO THE THRONE

In December 1413 the King, whose health had been failing for some years, was dangerously ill. He was then at his palace at Eltham, and for a while, says Walsingham, he seemed to be dead. But he recovered, and kept Christmas with such festivity as he might. In the following March he was again attacked as he was praying in the Confessor's Chapel at Westminster Abbey. His attendants carried him into the Abbot's house, where he shortly afterwards expired. One of his biographers tells us that the dying man called his successor to his side and advised him to fear God, to choose an honest confessor, to be diligent in his duty as a king, and to pay his (the speaker's) debts. The speech has the appearance of the appropriate orations which historians were accustomed to put into the mouth of their characters. If, as seems likely, the cause of death was apoplexy, it is probable that he never recovered consciousness.

The King died on March 20th. Parliament had been prorogued to the 24th of the month. It was *ipso facto* dissolved by the demise of the Crown; but the prelates, peers, and representatives of the Commons

who had been summoned to it assembled in an informal manner, and for the first time in English history, without waiting for the solemnities of coronation, spontaneously offered homage to their new Sovereign, though at the same time taking care to prevent their action from being afterwards made into a precedent.

The young Henry's accession to the throne is said to have been the occasion of a sudden change which converted a reckless and profligate youth into a sober God-fearing man. The contemporary evidence for this assertion comes from two sources—Thomas Walsingham, one of the long line of writers who formed the historical school of St. Alban's, and Thomas Elmham, who was then a monk of Canterbury and afterwards became one of Henry's chaplains. Elmham writes :

"He was in the days of his youth a diligent follower of idle practices, much given to instruments of music, and one who, loosing the reins of modesty, though zealously serving Mars, yet fired with the torches of Venus herself, and, in the intervals of his brave deeds as a soldier, wont to occupy himself with the other extravagances that attend the days of undisciplined youth."

And after treating of the death of the King he goes on to put a confession of sin into the mouth of the Prince. Strong as are the expressions, they are nothing more than what are uttered day after day by worshippers whom neither the world nor their own conscience accuses of any heinous crime. Further on we read :

"After he had spent the day in wailing and groaning, so soon as the shades of night covered the earth, the weeping Prince, taking advantage of the darkness, secretly visited a certain recluse of holy life at Westminster ; and laying bare

to him the secret sins of his whole life, was washed in the laver of true repentance, and receiving the antidote of absolution against the poison that he had before swallowed, so put off the mantle of vice and returned decently adorned with the cloak of virtue. Thus a barren willow was changed into a fruitful olive, a Cocytus into an Euphrates, a Paris into a Hippolytus, the left into the right, by a happy miracle."

Hardyng, Walsingham, and Otterbourne all use language to the same effect; and finally we have the testimony of the Italian who wrote under the pseudonym of Titus Livius. He was not strictly a contemporary; but he seems to have been in the service of Humphrey of Gloucester, the King's brother, and some weight must be given to his words. They are, it will be seen, little more than another version, couched in less extravagant language, of the chronicle of Elmham, and run thus:

"Wherefore he was said by his father and by the royal council to be especially dear to the said King, although his good report was damaged by certain blame cast upon him by some in this matter—in that he took great pleasure in music, and followed in moderation (*mediocriter*) the pleasures of love and war, and other things which the licence of a soldier's life is wont to permit, so long as his father lived. . . . While King Henry was yet dying, reflecting that he was about to come to the kingdom, he called unto him a priest, a monk of most virtuous life, and confessing to him his past errors, radically amended his life and manners in such fashion that no occasion of wantonness (*lascivie*) was ever afterwards found in him."

There is nothing said, it will be observed, about loose and vicious companions whom the young King banished from his presence as soon as he felt the responsibilities

of power. It is scarcely conclusive, perhaps, to show that the officers of his household during the days when he stood next to the throne were persons of respectable character. The same might be said of other heirs-apparent who yet have been undoubtedly profligate. The associates of a young prince's private life are not necessarily his chamberlain, the treasurer of his household, or other dignified officials. But there is absolutely no evidence to show that Henry was accustomed to the society of vicious and disreputable companions. His intimacy with Oldcastle, of which we shall have occasion to speak hereafter, certainly could not be so described.

On the other hand, we cannot wholly disregard the contemporary evidence (for all other has been left out of the account) which attributes to him a certain laxity of life during the years that preceded his accession to the throne. Such a laxity is only too probable in a young prince. The temptations to which the young kinsmen of the ruler are exposed, before they feel the responsibilities of power, are the weak point of the system of hereditary monarchy. It would have been scarcely indeed a miracle, but certainly a most uncommon experience, if Henry had passed through them altogether unscathed. But the language in which the errors of his youth are described may easily have been exaggerated. And this exaggeration may have been partly at least due to Henry himself. Those who read the confessions and self-reproaches of John Bunyan might easily believe him to have been guilty of excesses into which he did not really fall. Henry had something of the same devout temper, and may, it is at least

probable, have used language about himself that leaves a too unfavourable impression of his conduct. That he was no idler, wasting his time and strength in riotous excess, but on the contrary a vigorous and energetic youth, even precociously distinguished as a soldier and statesman, is abundantly clear. He was trusted by the King and the King's counsellors; the nation which had watched his career for more than ten years welcomed his accession, not with the doubtful hope that would be extended to a profligate promising reform, but with an enthusiasm of confidence and joy. And yet he may have been conscious to himself of transgressions in the past of which others took little or no account, but for which the fervour of his reception by his people might have made him feel a keener reproach. With this we may leave the subject.

The young King was crowned on April 10th, the Sunday before Easter, in the midst, as Walsingham tells us, of a great snowstorm, from which the people drew various auguries, favourable or unfavourable, of the character of the future reign. Meanwhile a new Parliament had been summoned to meet on May 15th. The Commons presented a number of petitions to the King, praying for the removal of grievances. It is impossible to judge of the justice or injustice of these complaints, and of the King's attitude with regard to them; but it is abundantly clear that he had a will of his own, and a definite determination to maintain his prerogative. Certain malpractices in the ecclesiastical courts were, he promised, to be corrected: if the bishops failed in their duty he would act himself. But a request that the knights and burgesses summoned to Parliament

might be allowed their expenses, met with the guarded answer that it should be done if a precedent could be found. To a petition for an extensive process of disforesting it was replied that such as had just complaints against the charters of the forests should be heard. Requests for the mitigation of the law of deodand[1] and for a concession of certain freedoms in trade were refused.

Henry's generosity of temper, or at least his confidence in his position, a frame of mind which often leads to the same course of action, was shown by his treatment of those whom a meaner or weaker prince might have regarded as rivals or enemies. The young Earl of March, who was still regarded by some as the rightful heir to the crown, was released from imprisonment to which the suspicious fears of the deceased King had condemned him. Henry had been the guardian of the young man's estates, and seems to have discharged the trust with fidelity. The Earl repaid him with affection, and, as will be seen, when a critical occasion came, with loyalty.

Another hereditary enemy was treated in the same generous fashion. The heir of the Percies, son of the Hotspur who fell on the field of Shrewsbury, had been carried by his grandfather into Scotland. Henry, in the second year of his reign, restored him to his title and estates.

Finally, what may be called a reparation was made

[1] The request seems reasonable enough—viz., that no boat or barge travelling on a river, out of which a person might accidentally fall and so be drowned, should be taken as a deodand, *i.e.* forfeited to the lord of the manor or the Crown as being a cause or instrument of death.

to the memory of the prince whom Henry's father had dispossessed. Richard had been buried almost secretly at Langley, in the Church of the Preaching Friars. His body was now removed to London, and buried in royal style in the Abbey of Westminster; "not," says Walsingham, "without great expense on the part of the King, who now confessed that he owed him the same respect that he did to his own natural father." At the same time the King provided that "four tapers should burn day and night about his grave while the world endureth;" once a week a *dirige* was to be chanted, and on the next day a requiem. After a mass a distribution was to be made of eleven shillings and eightpence; while on the *obit*, or anniversary of death, as much as twenty pounds was to be given away.

Thus reconciled to the enemies, living or dead, of his house, Henry could address himself with good conscience and hope to the work of his life.

CHAPTER VI

THE FRENCH CROWN

A FAMOUS scene in *Henry the Fifth* represents two English prelates consulting together how they may best put aside the imminent demand of the Commons for a secularisation of a great part of the Church revenues. The clergy were to be stripped of what would maintain fifteen earls, fifteen hundred knights, and six thousand or more esquires, besides lazar-houses and poor-houses, and still have a "thousand pounds by the year" for the coffers of the King. Such a spoliation would not only "drink deep," as the Bishop of Ely says, but, as his brother of Canterbury replies, "drink the cup and all." The King's new-born piety would not be a sufficient protection against this danger. Nor would it be averted even by the offer of a greater sum by way of contribution than the clergy had ever offered to any one of his predecessors. A more potent help would be found in the suggestion,

> "Of his true titles to some certain dukedoms;
> And, generally, to the crown and seat of France,
> Derived from Edward, his great-grandfather."

We are not called upon to discuss the historical foundation for this story. The chroniclers of the six-

teenth century probably put something of the feelings which were dominant in their own times into their narratives of the earlier age. But the movement which culminated in the action of Henry the Eighth was then beginning. The wealth of the Church was certainly overgrown and often ill-applied. Cupidity it was sure to excite; but wise and honourable statesmen also regarded it with dislike as an influence adverse to the national prosperity. But to suppose that the ecclesiastical authorities could stifle these feelings by forcing, so to speak, upon the nation a war to which it was averse or even indifferent is to contradict all the analogies of history.

It would be equally erroneous to suppose that Henry himself was driven to embark in war by a feeling of the insecurity of his position, and by the desire to conceal by the glory of his military achievements the weakness of his title to the throne. Still it is true that the claim to the French crown was the heritage of the Plantagenets, and that Henry was compelled to assert it if he would show himself the authentic representative of the second Henry and the third Edward.

For some time after William of Normandy seized the English throne the relations of the King of England to the King of France—it might be more correct to say, the king who reigned at Paris—were those of an over-powerful vassal to a weak suzerain. When Henry the Second actually ruled over a larger part of France than the prince who was nominally its sovereign, this reversal of the ordinary state of things, according to which the lord was the superior, the vassal the inferior, was complete. But the tendency of things was to strengthen the central

power at Paris, and to weaken the great feudatories. The English kings could not retain a permanent hold on their continental possessions. In the course of the forty-three years' reign of Philip Augustus the vast French territory held by Henry the Second was reduced to the provinces of Gascony and Guienne, from more than a half to less than a tenth of the whole country.

Without following in detail the events of the next hundred years, we may say that their tendency was to separate the two countries more and more completely, and to prepare the way for the change in their relations which may be held to date from the year 1327. In that year the last of the three sons of Philip the Fair died childless. Edward the Third of England, as the son of Philip's daughter Isabella, put forward a claim to the succession as against Philip of Valois, who, as descended from a common grandfather, Philip the Hardy, was his first cousin.[1] This claim he attempted to enforce by the invasion which began with the brilliant victories of Crecy and Poictiers, and reached a certain measure of success in the Treaty of Bretigny (1360). But before many years had passed, all but Calais was lost to England; and when Henry the Fifth resolved to recover what he claimed as the inheritance of his predecessors, he had to begin, it may be said, the work of conquest over again.

Allies, however, he had whose assistance he was to

[1] Edward's claim had to encounter the difficulty that, according to its argument, the French crown could not pass *to* a female (for in that case it would have gone to Joan, Queen of Navarre, the daughter of Louis the Tenth, Charles's eldest brother), but could pass *through* a female—that is, through his mother Isabella to himself.

find very useful. The dynasty of De Montfort had been established in possession of the dukedom of Britanny in a great measure by English help, and though the relations between the two countries had not been invariably friendly since that time, the sense of this obligation, and, still more powerfully, a jealous fear of the French king, inclined Britanny to the English alliance.

The Dukes of Burgundy, though they had no such motives of gratitude towards England, felt a far stronger hostility towards France. The feud between the rival factions which went by the names of Burgundians and Armagnacs had now been raging for several years; and though the attitude of the Burgundians varied—at the great struggle of Agincourt they were allies, though lukewarm and even doubtful allies, of the French—they ultimately ranked themselves decidedly on Henry's side.

In 1414, then, Henry formally demanded, as the heir of Isabella, mother of his great-grandfather Edward, the crown of France. This claim the French princes wholly refused to consider. Henry then moderated his demands so far, at least, as to allow Charles to remain in nominal possession of his kingdom; but they were still conceived on a scale such as to render their acceptance impossible. France was to cede to England, no longer as a feudal superior making a grant to a vassal, but in full sovereignty, the provinces of Normandy, Maine, and Anjou, together with all that was comprised in the ancient duchy of Aquitaine. Half, too, of Provence was claimed, and the arrears of the ransom of King John, amounting to twelve hundred thousand crowns, were also to be paid. Finally, the French king was to give his

youngest daughter, Katharine, in marriage to Henry, with a portion of two million crowns.[1]

The French Ministers offered, in answer, to yield the duchy of Aquitaine, comprising the provinces of Anjou, Gascony, Guienne, and Poitou, and to give the hand of the Princess Katharine with a dowry of six hundred thousand crowns, more, it was urged, than any daughter of France had ever before received on the occasion of her marriage.

These offers were refused. On September 17th (1414) writs were issued calling together a new Parliament to meet on November 19th at Westminster. The King was present, but what we should call the Royal Speech was delivered by Henry Beaufort, Bishop of Winchester and Lord Chancellor. In this the speaker declared, not only that the King was resolved to govern his realm wisely, but that he would prosecute even to death his claim to the rightful inheritance, so long withheld from him and his predecessors, of the crown of France. That he might do this with success, the Commons were exhorted to grant a liberal subsidy. They voted, with the assent of the peers and the clergy, two-tenths and two-fifteenths.[2]

[1] The demand in money amounted in all to more than a million pounds in the currency of the time. It should be multiplied by fifteen to convert it into present value. The sum would have been considered large, had it not been dwarfed by the enormous ransom exacted from France within the last few years.

[2] These were taxes on capital, the tenth being payable in town, the fifteenth in the country. But the sum actually levied was not the literal tenth or fifteenth of the property taxed. Burdensome as the imposts certainly were, these payments would have passed all endurance. From before the middle of the fourteenth century these taxes had been commuted for fixed sums. So much was levied from each township or manor.

The scrupulous side of Henry's character, which seems to have been not less developed than what may be described as the ambitious side, would not be satisfied without another attempt at negotiation. His uncle, the Earl of Dorset, afterwards Duke of Exeter, accompanied by the Bishops of Durham and Norwich, and a retinue so splendidly equipped as to excite the astonishment of the French, visited Paris with a new offer. Normandy and Maine were no longer to be claimed: the dowry of the Princess was to be reduced from two to one million crowns; but the duchy of Aquitaine and a portion of Provence were still demanded. The French Ministers declined to yield in the matter of the territory, but were willing to raise their offer of a dowry from six to eight hundred thousand crowns. These terms were, of course, unacceptable, and the ambassadors returned to England.

One more effort for peace was made, and this time the overture came from France. It may be conveniently mentioned in this place, though it was not made till the preparations for war were considerably advanced, and indeed was called forth by the alarming report of the fleet and army which the English king was mustering that had been carried across the Channel.

On the 29th of June the King, being present in a council held at Winchester, granted seven safe-conducts to the ambassadors of "our adversary of France [for so, in view of his own claim, he now styles the French king] about to come into the realm on account of certain matters manifestly concerning the honour of God and the staying of the shedding of human blood." The principal ambassador was Thomas, Archbishop of Bruges.

Another high ecclesiastic, three nobles, and two lawyers accompanied him. The mission was on a splendid scale, for the united retinues numbered three hundred and fifty. Henry received them at Winchester.

The Archbishop of Bruges set forth his mission in a long and eloquent oration. After a preliminary dissuasion of war and praise of peace, he proceeded to offer terms: Limoges and its dependencies were to be ceded to the English crown, and another hundred thousand crowns to be added to the Princess's dowry.

On the question of money a compromise had been nearly reached. The English demand had been reduced to a million crowns, and the French offer raised to nine hundred thousand. As to territory, the difference was hopelessly wide. Limoges and its dependencies was a poor country, which it would not be worth while to accept. The Archbishop of Canterbury, the accomplished Chicheley, was spokesman for the King. He made no mention of dowry, but declared that if the French king would not give with his daughter Aquitaine, Anjou, and all that had ever appertained to the ancestors of the King of England, the said King would in no wise "retire his army nor break his journey, but would with all diligence enter into France, and destroy the people, waste the country, and subvert the towns with blood, sword, and fire, and never cease till he had recovered his ancient right and lawful patrimony." When Chicheley sat down, the King stood up and declared his assent to what he had said, and promised on the word of a prince to perform it to the uttermost.

It was evident that he was bent on war. The conces-

sions made by his own ambassadors had been taken back, and the conditions now demanded amounted to nothing less than a partition of France. At the beginning of the negotiations these had been put forward, in a not uncommon fashion of diplomacy, as a maximum from which it might be convenient to make large deductions; as an *ultimatum*, delivered by a sovereign whose army was almost ready to sail, they meant nothing less than war.

And so the Archbishop of Bruges took them. Casting aside diplomatic forms, he broke forth into an angry denunciation of English arrogance and injustice, and warned the King of the danger into which he was running. Finally, he demanded a safe-conduct to return; a mere form of speech, as such a safe-conduct was included in that already given to him and his colleagues.

English chroniclers call him "a proud and presumptuous prelate," yet his anger was nothing but natural. Henry did not resent it, though he did not retreat one whit from his position. The safe-conduct he granted, and then added (I quote the speech as it is given by Hollingshead):

"I little esteem your French brass, and less set by your power and strength; I know perfectly my right to my reign which you usurp; and except you deny the apparent truth, so do yourselves also; if you neither do nor will know it, yet God and the world knoweth it. The power of your master you see, but my puissance ye have not yet tasted. If he have loving subjects, I am (I thank God) not unstored of the same; and I say this unto you, that before one year pass, I trust to make the highest crown of your country to stoop, and the proudest mitre to have his humiliation. In the meantime tell this to the usurper your master, that

within three months I will enter into France, as into mine own true and lawful patrimony, appointing to acquire the same, not with bray of words, but with deeds of men and dint of sword, by the aid of God, in whom is my whole trust and confidence. Further matter at this present I impart not unto you, saving that with warrant you may depart safely and surely into your own country, where I trust sooner to visit you than you shall have cause to bid me welcome."

We can hardly suppose that we have here Henry's very words. The speech has a certain rhetorical, antithetical cast that inclines us to attribute it to the pen of a chronicler who, we may conjecture further, was writing in Latin. But it probably represents the substance of the King's reply with sufficient accuracy.

Nothing more in the way of negotiation could be done. It only remained to press forward the preparations for war.

CHAPTER VII

PREPARATIONS FOR WAR

HENRY'S preparations were begun, as many believe, very soon after his accession to the throne, and were not discontinued during negotiations which can scarcely have been intended to succeed. His situation was, on the whole, favourable for his undertaking. He had no reason to dread a hostile diversion by way of Scotland. The Scottish king had been for many years a prisoner in England, and though the chronic disturbances of the Border did not cease, he was an effectual pledge for the good behaviour of his subjects, who, if they wished to indulge their hereditary enmity to England, had to take service with the French king. The Welsh insurrection had long ceased to be dangerous, but it had not been yet suppressed, and it might become troublesome again when the royal forces were employed elsewhere. Henry did not forget this contingency. From previous amnesties offered to the rebels the name of the ringleader, Owen Glendower, had been omitted. Henry now included him in his proposition. He commissioned his "faithful counsellor, Gilbert Talbot, to treat with Owen Glendower of Wales," and promised to receive the said Owen and "others our rebels of Wales" to his favour

if they would only apply for it. This mandate to Gilbert Talbot bears date July 5th, and was issued from Porchester Castle. At home there was at least a better prospect of harmony and union than had existed for many years. The Lollards indeed still gave some trouble, but their favour with the people was not what it had been. The war spirit which had seized the nation did not suffer it to think of the grievances which had seemed so urgent and of the hopes of reform which had been so attractive a few years before. As for the dynastic enemies who in the next generation were to overthrow the house of Lancaster, they were still feeble. The prince on whose claims they relied was personally attached to Henry, and the ease with which the conspiracy of Southampton was crushed shows that at this time they were not really formidable.

Henry had no accumulated wealth to fall back upon when he set himself to the task of providing for the many necessities of the campaign which he meditated. On the contrary, he had found on his accession the public treasury empty and even embarrassed with debt. But his subjects were heartily with him in his purpose, and they came forward with liberal subsidies. The first Parliament of his reign had continued to him the grant of a tax on stoneware, of tonnage and poundage which they had made to his father, and that which met in November 1414 had, as we have seen, been not less generous.

Henry, on his part, was raising money in every possible way. We find, for instance, a bond given to Paul Milan, a merchant from Lucca, for a loan of two hundred marks, and a debt of £478 18s. 8d. for cloth of

gold and other merchandise supplied by the same Paul, the debt being secured on the tolls of coast from the ports of Southampton and Sandwich. Certain merchants of Venice, again, were given security for the repayment of a loan of a thousand marks on the customs of the port of London. These were ordinary transactions. We can hardly say the same for the pledging of the crown called the Crown Henry to the Duke of Clarence as security for the pay due to him and his men. It was to be redeemed before January 1st, 1416; should this not be done, the said Duke would be free to deal with it after his pleasure. Next we find a certain great tabernacle, once belonging to the Duke of Burgundy, of silver gilt, and garnished with twenty-two sapphires and one hundred and thirty-seven pearls, pledged to various persons, among whom are the Dean and Chapter of Exeter, for the repayment of a loan of eight hundred and sixty marks; while some Norfolk creditors have a great circlet of gold pledged to them in consideration of a loan of a thousand marks. It will be remembered that Devonshire and Norfolk were at this time among the richest, if not actually the richest, counties in England.

Henry, it is clear, spared no expense in making his army as numerous and effective as possible. In that wonderful collection of public documents known as Rymer's *Fœdera* we find the contracts into which he entered for the payment and maintenance of this force. It will be interesting to give Dr. Lingard's careful summary of their contents.

"1. Contracts were made by the Privy Seal with different lords and gentlemen, who bound themselves to serve with a

certain number of men for a year from the day on which they were first mustered. 2. The pay of a duke was to be 13s. 4d. per day; an earl, 6s. 8d.; a baron or banneret, 3s. 4d.; a knight, 2s.; an esquire, 1s.; an archer, 6d. 3. The pay, or security for its amount, was to be delivered by the treasurer a quarter of a year in advance; and if the money was not actually paid at the beginning of the fourth quarter, the engagement was to be at an end. As an additional remuneration, each contractor received the 'usual regard' or douceur of 100 marks for every thirty men-at-arms. 4. A duke was to have fifty horses; an earl, twenty-four; a baron or banneret, sixteen; a knight, six; an esquire, four; an archer, one. The horses were to be furnished by the contractor, the equipment by the King. 5. All prisoners were to belong to the captor; but if they were kings, the sons of kings, or officers high in command bearing commissions from kings, they were to belong to the Crown, on payment of a reasonable recompense to the captors. 6. The booty taken was to be divided into three parts. Two remained to the men; the third was again divided into three parts, of which the leader took two and left the third to the King."

These arrangements strike us as being as liberal as they are business like. Henry, it is clear, would not run the risk of failure by starving his great expedition, or by neglecting to enlist on his side the interests of his troops.

In another important matter, little regarded or wholly disregarded before his time, he showed his remarkable capacity for military command. This was the medical service of the army. Generals, of course, had often taken their physicians with them into the field. We have, for instance, the diaries, with notes of symptoms and treatment, of the physicians who attended Alexander the Great. But now, for the first time, at least in English history, we find a commander-in-chief

making regular provision for the medical and surgical treatment of his sick and wounded. Early in the year (the indentures bear date April 29th, 1415) the King had agreements drawn up with his physician Nicholas Colnet and his surgeon Thomas Morstede. Each was to have the daily pay of twelve pence, and to have a guard of three archers, each archer receiving the daily pay of sixpence.

We do not hear of Nicholas Colnet being furnished with any assistance. Anything like hospital treatment of disease was probably impossible in a campaign of those days; and a staff of physicians could hardly have had any proper facilities for using whatever knowledge they may have possessed. On the other hand, Thomas Morstede, the surgeon, was accompanied by a considerable establishment. When a wound had been received, life could often be saved, or efficiency preserved, by immediate surgical treatment. The surgeon-general, as we may call him, was accordingly directed to take with him twelve of his own craft. Each of the twelve was to receive the daily pay of an archer; and in addition to the daily twelve pence, a quarterly allowance of a hundred marks was assigned to each of the two chief medical officers.

Nearly a month later Morstede presented a petition to the King praying for a sum of money for the purchase of such things as were necessary for his office, and also that all persons engaged in the surgical service of the army should be directed to act under his instructions, and should receive such wages as he should appoint. A third request was for a transport-service, modestly limited to a chariot and two waggons. Mor-

stede wished also to know what wages he was to receive, and how many attendants were to be allowed him. The King's reply granted the chariot and waggons for the ambulance service and twelve assistants: but it is not clear that these twelve were the same surgeons whom Morstede had been originally directed to take with him.

Sixpence a day could not have been a very attractive remuneration. Accordingly we are not surprised to find Morstede afterwards applying to the King for power to press, "as well within as without franchise birth, persons of his craft such as he should choose to accompany him." In the following year, that it may not be necessary to return to the subject, the King issued a writ to Morstede and William Breowardine, his colleague, to this effect:

> "Know ye that we have appointed to you, conjointly and severally, surgeons and other workmen, to take and provide without delay for the making of certain instruments necessary and fitting for your mystery, such as may be required for our present campaign beyond the sea."

The army, raised and equipped with such care and forethought, numbered, it is said, six thousand men-at-arms and twenty-four thousand archers. Cannons as effective as the manufacturing skill of that day could produce, and other engines of war had been procured. So effective and so well prepared an army had never before been collected in England for service abroad. A splendid relic of the expedition remains to this day in the Record Office. On July 20th a roll was prepared in which should be written the names of all who were to set forth with the King. It is still to be seen, a

splendid example of the caligraphy of a time when that art was approaching its perfection.

The army was on the point of embarking, Henry himself having come to Southampton to superintend the operation, when everything was delayed by the discovery of a conspiracy which had for its object nothing less than a change of dynasty.

Its ringleader was Richard Plantagenet, Earl of Cambridge, second son of Edmund of Langley, Duke of York. He had received his title from Henry, but he seems to have conceived the hope of advancing his fortunes more effectively by supporting the elder branch of the Plantagenets. "He intended," says the record of his trial, "to kill the usurper Henry of Lancaster, and to set the Earl of March upon the throne." He had married Anne, the Earl's sister, and in the event of the Earl dying without issue, as actually happened nine years later, his own son Richard would be heir to the throne.[1] This conspiracy, therefore, was a premature attempt to assert the claims which were afterwards advanced for the house of York, whose head at this time was the conspirator's elder brother. The Earl had also, it is said, what may be called a second string to his bow in a person supposed to be Richard the Second, escaped from the Tower. This pretender, Thomas of Trumpyngton, was then in Scotland. With the Earl of Cambridge were associated Sir Thomas Grey of Heton, in Northumberland, who was probably the intermediary of the King's enemies on both sides of the Scotch border, and Lord Scrope of Mersham, nephew of the Arch-

[1] This Richard was the Duke of York who was killed after the battle of Wakefield, and whose son was Edward the Fourth.

bishop of York whom Henry the Fourth had executed. Scrope was the King's intimate companion.

The plan of the conspiracy was to conduct the Earl of March to the Welsh border and then proclaim him king. Henry Percy, who had not yet returned from Scotland, and some Scotch lords were to create a diversion in the north.

The King acted with his accustomed vigour. The conspirators were at once put upon their trial and found guilty. They were too dangerous to be spared. It would be impossible to carry on the war with vigour if the enemies of the dynasty were to be allowed to plot against it at home. But Henry, though he was stern, was not cruel. The guilty persons were executed, but without the indignities that usually accompanied the punishment of treason. The friendly relation between the Earl of March and the King was not disturbed by this rash attempt. The story that the Earl encouraged the conspirators and then betrayed them, may be safely disregarded.

CHAPTER VIII

THE INVASION OF FRANCE

HENRY set sail from Southampton on August 11th. His point of attack was Harfleur, in the estuary of the Seine, now a decayed village, but then reckoned to be the first seaport of Normandy. This importance was one reason for attacking it; another was the activity shown by its sailors in capturing English shipping. The fleet of transports was necessarily large, fourteen or sixteen hundred vessels in all; it seems to have accomplished the voyage in safety, though, as the disembarkation of the troops did not begin till the night of August 14th, it may have encountered rough weather, and some stores were certainly spoiled by the sea.

Henry's first care was to issue strict orders for the good behaviour of his army. All property of the Church was to be held sacred, and no violence to be done to any clerical person; women were not to be injured. The penalty of death was to be inflicted on all offenders.

He had effected his landing, which it would have been easy to oppose, without molestation. Nor did he meet with any hindrance when, four days afterwards, the disembarkation of his men and stores completed, he marched

to Harfleur and invested the town. This occupied both banks of the river Lézarde, a tributary of the Seine. The entrance to the harbour was defended by a chain drawn across from two towers which flanked either end of the walls. The defences of the town were strong, and each of the three gates was defended by an outwork. The garrison consisted of four hundred men-at-arms, who with their attendants may have made up a force of between two and three thousand men. It was reinforced, before the investment of the town was made complete, by a body of troops under the Lord of Gaucourt, who immediately assumed the chief command. Henry sent a herald to demand the surrender of the town. It was consistent with the position which he claimed, that of a sovereign demanding his rightful inheritance, that he threatened the inhabitants with death if they refused obedience to the lawful Duke of Normandy.

A regular siege was then commenced. Trenches were pushed up to the town, and when the batteries were finished a cannonade was opened. Henry had some heavy field-pieces and a certain number of artillerymen and engineers, though these, of course, did not bear anything like the modern proportion to the whole force of the army. The defence was obstinate. The besieged repaired the damage caused by the cannonade almost as fast as it was done, and successfully countermined the English mines. They inflicted no little loss on their assailants by the missiles which they discharged from the walls, and even made some sallies with success. Meanwhile the English army was suffering greatly. No small part of the stores brought from England had

been damaged in the passage across the Channel, and supplies from the country could only be obtained by sending out large bodies of men. It was not long before disease began to show itself in the camp. Bad and scanty food, and the wetness of the weather, which seems to have been constantly unfavourable throughout the campaign, caused an epidemic of dysentery. As many as two thousand men are said to have perished of this disease. Among them was the Bishop of Norwich—who, churchman as he was, seems to have been a trusted and efficient counsellor in military matters—and many nobles and knights.

Henry did not fail to perceive the gravity of the situation, and determined to risk an assault. This was to be delivered at dawn, after a cannonade had been kept up during the night. But before morning came, the commander of the garrison sent an envoy to the King, bearing the offer to capitulate unless the town should be relieved by the King of France within three days. It was now the 19th of September, and the siege had lasted exactly thirty days. No help arrived within the stipulated time; indeed the French king and his counsellors had at once informed the inhabitants that their army was not ready to act. On Sunday the 22nd, the Lord of Gaucourt, accompanied by a number of the chief inhabitants of Harfleur, made a formal surrender of the keys to the English king. Henry received his visitors in a magnificent tent which had been raised for the purpose on a hill fronting the town. Everything was arranged to suit the royal state which it was a point of principle with him to assume. Sir Robert Umfraville stood on his right hand holding a spear, on the

point of which was the crowned helmet which it was his custom to wear, and which denoted that the King was seeking to recover his own by arms. The English nobles stood in ranks on either side. The ceremony over, the Governor and his company were royally feasted, and on the next day Henry entered the town.

It was characteristic of the devout temper of the man that his first thought was for his religious duties. He dismounted on reaching the gate, had his shoes and beaver removed, and walked barefooted to the church of St. Martin, where he offered up a thanksgiving for his success. This piety, however, did not prevent him from pushing to the extreme his use of a conqueror's rights. The nobles and men-at-arms were stripped of their armour and sent away, "clothed in their jackets only," after giving a promise on oath to surrender themselves prisoners at Calais on the Martinmas following (November 11th). This, perhaps, was no more than defeated combatants might have expected. But the treatment of the inhabitants seems to have been harsh. They were compelled to ransom their lives with all that they possessed, and then, with their wives and children, were driven out of the town. To each was given a miserable pittance of five sous, and they were permitted to take with them a part of their clothing. "It was pitiful," says Monstrelet, writing apparently from the report of an eye-witness, "to see and hear the sorrow of these poor people, thus driven away from their dwellings and property."

Harfleur was undoubtedly a great prize. The actual amount of booty taken in the town was large, and the harbour was the most important in Western Normandy.

The loss of it, too, was deeply galling to the French king, who made it the ground of an urgent summons to his nobles that for want of succour his gallant and loyal subjects of Harfleur had been forced to surrender. But the capture of a single town, however important and wealthy, was not an adequate result of an expedition which had aimed at nothing less than the conquest of France. It became a pressing question what was to be done. The first expedient tried, if we may so speak, was to send a challenge to the Dauphin, offering to submit the decision of the claim to the throne of France to the issue of a single combat. Henry was too good a soldier not to know that his antagonists were not likely to give him so easy a way of escaping from a perilous position, and could not have been disappointed when no answer was sent to his message. The safest course would now have been to return at once ; and this seems to have been pressed upon the King by the majority of his counsellors. But this prudent advice did not approve itself to Henry's adventurous temper. He was determined to show that, at least, he was not afraid of the foes whom he had challenged, and who, as he declared—it is hard to say with what belief in his own words—had unjustly seized his inheritance. He determined accordingly to make what may be called a military parade to Calais. This involved a march of not less than a hundred and fifty miles through a hostile country, a dangerous, and, but that one who cherishes such designs as Henry's must make a reputation for daring, a useless operation ; but the King's determined will overcame all opposition, and preparations were made to carry out the plan.

The sick and wounded were sent back to England, and with them the prisoners—who, however, could not have been numerous—the booty, and the engines of war, for which Henry probably felt that he had not adequate means of transport. It suggests a curious contrast to the conditions of modern warfare to find a skilful general voluntarily ridding himself of his artillery. Five hundred men-at-arms and a thousand archers were left to garrison Harfleur. On October 8th the King commenced his march with such forces as were left. Elmham, his chaplain, who was probably present, puts them at scarcely nine hundred men-at-arms and five thousand archers; Monstrelet estimates the former at two thousand, the latter at fifteen thousand.

Nearly half of his purposed journey Henry seems to have accomplished unmolested. At Eu, near Tréport, the seat of the Counts of Artois, his light troops were attacked, but repulsed the enemy with loss. And now his difficulties began. His position, indeed, was curiously like that in which his great-grandfather, the third Edward, had been before the victory of Crecy. He was in the presence of superior forces, and he had to cross the Somme, a considerable river, fordable in few places, in despite of them. Edward had made the passage at Blanchetaque, a ford near the sea, which got its name from the white stones which there formed the bottom of the river. Henry's first idea was to follow his example, but he learned from his scouts that the ford was strongly guarded by the French, and altering his line of march made for Pont-de-Remy, a place about as much above Abbeville

as Blanchetaque is below it. The detachment sent to force the bridge found it strongly occupied by the enemy, and was unable to dislodge them. Edward had made an equally fruitless attempt at the same place.

Fortune, or rather the fault of his enemies, befriended him, as it had befriended his predecessor. A Norman peasant, who preferred a hundred nobles to his duty to his country, had guided Edward to the ford of Blanchetaque; and now the neglect of the people of St. Quentin, who had been commanded to stop the ford between Betencourt and Voyenne, allowed a passage to Henry. The crossing was no easy task. The river was swollen with rain, and the army had no little difficulty in approaching the bank. If a sufficient French force had come in time to dispute the passage, the English might have lost heavily, or even been destroyed; but the first part of the army had made its way over unmolested, the King himself superintending the operation, before the enemy came in sight, and then not in sufficient force to prevent the completion of the passage. Before nightfall the whole army had safely reached the right bank of the Somme. Henry had been marching and counter-marching for nine days on the other shore, and had been forced to make a long detour from his proposed line. If he could have made the passage of the river, as he had once hoped to do, at the ford of Blanchetaque, he would have been at less than half the distance from Calais than that at which he now found himself.

The line of march from which he had been driven by the necessity of crossing the Somme he was bent on

regaining.[1] The nearer to the sea the easier the road, and there would be the advantage that one flank of the army would be safe against attack. Accordingly he moved westward unmolested, it would seem, by the French troops which had been previously guarding the right bank of the Somme, and had now fallen back on the main body of their countrymen. His route led him through the villages of Peronne, Albert, Bonnieres, and Frevent. On October 24th he reached the village of Blangy-on-the-Ternoise, a stream with an average breadth of about thirty feet and of considerable depth. It is possible, however, that it was not then, as it is now, dammed up to work a mill; and it is at this mill that local tradition fixes the place of his crossing. Continuing his march up the slope which leads to the table-land above the valley of the Ternoise, he found himself close to the enemy, who indeed had posted themselves in great force across the way to Calais. Their presence was announced to the Duke of York, who was in command of the van. The King, calling a halt, rode forward to reconnoitre, and began at once to make his arrangements for the battle which he now felt to be imminent. His main body took up its position at Maisoncelles, the baggage being placed in the rear of the wood that still bears that name. The front lines of the French army were but three bow-shots off; according to one account still

[1] A story is told to the effect that on one occasion he passed the place which had been arranged for his quarters. He would not return. He was in his war-coat, and could not go back without displeasing God. The anecdote seems characteristic of the man, and, indeed, to suit the temper which had suggested the march to Calais.

less; their headquarters seem to have been somewhere behind the village of Azincour or Agincourt.

The night was spent by the English in much discomfort. The King's chaplain tells that he turned aside to a village where there were houses, but very few of them. Some of the principal personages had a roof over their heads; the main body of the army had to be content with such rest as they could find in gardens and orchards, and this amidst drenching rain. The supply of meat and drink was, however, a little better thān usual. The chaplains with the army were busy almost till morning with receiving confessions and giving absolution, and the complaint was that there were not enough of them for this duty, although one of their number speaks of them as a clerical army. On the other hand, the French passed the time in feasting and merriment, and found one source of amusement, it is said, in casting dice for their prisoners. The same story is told of the demeanour of the victors and the vanquished before the battle of Hastings. It is possible that it may be true, but it certainly points a moral very aptly.

CHAPTER IX

AGINCOURT

After a night of heavy rain, the morning of October 25th dawned bright and clear. The French army barred, as has been said, Henry's road to Calais, but, relying on their vast superiority of force,[1] they had not been at the pains to take up what could be called a military position. A huge mass of men occupied the level ground that lies between the villages of Agincourt and Rousseauville. Their extreme right touched the road to Calais, and if Henry was to gain that, he would have to make his way through their ranks. So impossible did this seem, that they took none of the ordinary precautions observed by an army that is going to give battle. The villages of Agincourt and Tramecourt, which were respectively in a slight advance of their right and left wings, were left to be occupied by

[1] Contemporary estimates of their numbers vary very much. Monstrelet, who probably drew his information from French sources, puts them at one hundred and fifty thousand. Elsewhere he says that they were more than six times the number of the English. The latter, however, could not have numbered as many as twenty-five or even twenty thousand. There would be a tendency, of course, after the battle to diminish and to exaggerate the numbers engaged. It is certain that the French superiority was very great. More it is impossible to say.

the English. No attempt was made to take advantage of the woods which flanked their position. To stand still and to let their enemy dash himself to pieces on their ranks was the policy of their generals, if a policy they had. Even to this plan, which indeed might well have been successful, it will be seen that they did not adhere.

The disposition of the French army may be thus described:—D'Albret, Constable of France, with the Dukes of Orleans and Bourbon, commanded the front line, which consisted, it was said, of twenty thousand men. They were on foot, heavily armed with long coats of mail, greaves, and helmets; but on either wing there were posted bodies of cavalry, ready to charge when the occasion offered. Behind this came another line, commanded by the Duke d'Alençon; and behind this again a third, which was composed chiefly of cavalry.

The English army consisted of one single line. So narrow was the space of the future battle-field that the English front was equal in extent to the French. Comparatively small, too, as were their numbers, they were sufficient for the practical purpose of giving an adequate solidity to the line. In the first clash of battle, at least, the two would be on equal terms. The small force of men-at-arms, not more than three or four thousand, was posted in the centre. The right and left divisions were mainly composed of archers, some of whom were also interspersed among the men-at-arms. Each archer had a stake shod with iron, which he planted in the ground before him. The men had carried these with them almost from the beginning of their march from Harfleur. They were to act as an extemporised palisade

in the case of an attack. Detachments of archers were posted in the villages of Agincourt and Tramecourt, and were ready to harass the enemy should they advance to the attack. A body of cavalry was even pushed forward beyond the French left. The baggage was placed, under the protection of a small guard, behind the village of Maisoncelles.

Henry himself commanded in the centre, a conspicuous object to all eyes. He was not one of the kings who went into a battle disguised. There was doubtless a personal taste for splendour and ornament shown in his dress and accoutrements; but he was also impressed with the belief that a king must be, and show himself to be, the foremost fighter as well as the leader of his army. He wore a surcoat which with its gay blazonry set forth his claim to the double throne, showing as it did the lilies of France and the leopards of England. His helmet was circled with a rich crown of gold. While he was marshalling his lines and encouraging his men to do their best, he rode a small grey horse. This part of his work finished, he dismounted, and took his place on foot in front of his line. The Duke of York commanded the right wing, which was slightly in advance of the line: the left, on the other hand, was slightly withdrawn, and this was in charge of Lord Camoys. Each division had its proper banner; over the head of Henry was displayed the royal standard with the quarterings of France and England.

For some time after daybreak no movement was made on either side till both armies had taken their breakfast. Then followed an attempt, probably made by some influential ecclesiastic on the French side, to negotiate

a peace. We may be sure that the demands made were impossible; in any case, Henry peremptorily refused them. A movement on the part of the French cavalry followed, and it was seen that the French artillery was ready to commence operations. Henry saw that he must act, and, with the happy audacity which has its occasions not less often than prudence in the conduct of great captains, ordered an advance. Sir Thomas Erpyngham, a knight grown grey in campaigning, threw his truncheon into the air. This was the signal for the forces that lay in ambush, and for the line that fronted the enemy, to advance. A loud cry of "St. George!" was raised from flank to flank, and the English moved forward with their king at their head.

The advance was a feint. Perhaps it would be more correct to say that, in case of need, it would have been converted into a serious attack, but it was probably intended to provoke the French into a forward movement. If it was so, the purpose was accomplished with the happiest result. To the French, in the pride of their overwhelming numbers and splendid equipment, it seemed nothing less than an insult that this little band of ragged, wayworn soldiers should actually advance to attack them. In a moment the plan of waiting for the enemy to waste his strength upon their solid line was abandoned. They crowded forward, as if to trample down by sheer weight of numbers the insolent invaders.

Then the English halted. The archers planted their stakes in the ground, and stood sheltered behind them, while they poured forth that deadly hail of arrows which more than once before all the chivalry of France had been unable to withstand. At first it seemed as if

numbers must prevail, even against all Henry's skilful dispositions and all the desperate valour of his men. For a time the English line was borne backward by the sheer weight of the advancing enemy. It is not easy to state precisely what turned the fortune of the day. There was the marvellous efficiency of the archers, whose clothyard shafts were driven with a force which we, who know the bow only as a toy, can hardly conceive; there was the resistance of the palisade of stakes, which stopped the charge of the French cavalry, and left the men and their horses a helpless mark for the aim of the bowmen; there was the paralysing crowd of the French attack, a crowd so thick that only those in front could even lift their hands to strike a blow; and there was, almost as potent a cause as any, the deep clay of the Agincourt plateau. It would not be easy to find a stiffer and more tenacious soil; and it was now more than usually deep and cumbersome. The long autumn rains, which had helped to thin the English army as it lay before the walls of Harfleur or painfully struggled along the bank of the Somme, now lent them a most valuable aid. Even where a man-at-arms or a knight found space to act, he was kept in a forced indolence by the sheer impossibility of moving.

And, when the day had begun to turn against the French, the panic which their valour, so powerful in attack, seems unable to resist in the moment of defeat, set in, and made it hopeless to retrieve the fortunes of the fight. Yet there were not wanting gallant attempts to turn the defeat into victory. Every one recognised how great a share the tactical skill and courage of Henry were having in the victory which now seemed

about to be won. If he could be struck down where he stood, conspicuous in his embroidered surcoat and crown-encircled helmet, all might yet go well for the French. Accordingly the Duke d'Alençon pressed forward with a company of knights and men-at-arms to the spot where Henry was fighting. He struck to the ground with a dangerous wound in his groin the King's youngest brother, Humphrey, Duke of Gloucester; and when Henry stepped forward to protect the fallen man, the Duke dealt him a blow so violent that it dinted his helmet and brought him to his knees. But the effort was hopeless; the odds were too great. "I yield my sword," cried the Duke, and Henry called to his knights to save the Frenchman's life. It was too late; he fell pierced by numerous wounds, and all his companions shared his fate.

The rally led by the Duke d'Alençon was the final effort of the first line of the French. It was now, we must suppose, that the English found themselves indebted to the strange protection of which one of the chroniclers speaks—a pile of French corpses so high that it sheltered them as they poured their arrows into the foe. The second line seems to have made no separate attempt to restore the fortune of the day. The unceasing shower of the English shafts, the advance of Henry and his men-at-arms, and, finally, the charge of the force which had been put in ambush on their left flank, drove them in unresisting flight. Among the leaders of the third line there were found some who showed more courage, perhaps we should say presence of mind, for courage was not wanting to the vanquished on that day. The Lord of Fauquemberg,

with some other nobles, had with difficulty kept a few hundred men-at-arms together, with whom they now made a gallant charge on the English: it was useless; they were killed or made prisoners to a man. A few other such efforts were made by isolated bodies in various parts of the field, but all were equally hopeless. Everywhere the French were routed, slain, or taken. The victory of the English was complete.

The glory of this victory was marred by a deplorable incident. News was brought to Henry that the enemy were attacking his rear, and had already captured a large part of his baggage. The battle was not yet over, but it was already clear which way it was going: "during the heat of the combat, when the English had gained the upper hand and made several prisoners," are the words which Monstrelet uses to describe the time. But victory, though in sight, was not yet gained. Henry knew that the forces of the enemy still outnumbered his own. Even yet, were they to know that any part of his line had been broken, they might rally and change the fortune of the day. Were such an effort to be made, the prisoners, of whom a considerable number had already been taken, would be a formidable danger. At the best they would require a guard of fighting men, which he could not spare; they might even take part in the attack. The safety of the army seemed to require decisive and instant action, and accordingly Henry issued orders that the prisoners were to be killed. It may well have been a necessity, but it was a necessity of the most deplorable kind. Yet we must not suppose that the opinion of those days regarded the act as it would be regarded by ourselves. "It was a most lamentable

thing," writes a Norman gentleman who was with the English army, and who was probably an eye-witness of the scene, "for all these noblemen of France were there killed and cut to pieces, heads and faces; it was a fearful sight to see." The natural human horror at so bloody a spectacle comes out in the last words; but what seemed so lamentable a thing to the Sieur de St. Remy was that so many *noblemen* of France should be thus slaughtered. For prisoners, it must be remembered, were not taken out of mercy. The ransoms that they would pay were the points in the great war-game which nobles and knights were playing. No man, we may be sure, ever encumbered himself with a prisoner from whom nothing could be expected. The penniless common soldier was slaughtered without mercy. It perfectly agrees with this that the knights to whom the King issued his command flatly refused to obey it, and that he had to send a squire with three hundred archers to execute it. The money-interest of the knights in the lives of the prisoners was too powerful for the sense of discipline, seldom very strong in a feudal army, and even for the instinct of self-preservation. To kill their prisoners would be to lose their only hope of repaying themselves for the vast outlay of their equipment. Doubtless it was against the strong class-feeling of the day that a *gentleman* should be so put to death; this would be against the rules of the game. But it is certain that considerations of finance more than of humanity dictated this refusal to execute the King's orders.

As a matter of fact, the horrible deed was not, after all, a military necessity. The news that was

brought to Henry had been grossly exaggerated. The attack on the rear of the army was really nothing but an attempt to plunder. A few men-at-arms and about six hundred peasants, led by one Isambart, a resident in the village of Agincourt, whose local knowledge probably suggested the attempt, fell upon the baggage of the English army and succeeded in rifling a large part of it. A long list of the jewels which were lost on that occasion is preserved among the public records. Walsingham tells us that the English crown was captured, and being sent, as we may suppose, to Paris, caused great delight, as it seemed to augur the capture of the King himself. Monstrelet mentions, as part of the spoil, a sword, ornamented with diamonds, that was also part of the royal property: with this precious offering Isambart of Agincourt vainly endeavoured to appease the wrath of the Duke of Burgundy, who, justly regarding him as responsible for the massacre of the prisoners, had him thrown into prison.

Henry now rode round the field of battle, accompanied by his kinsmen and the great nobles attached to his person. He called to him the French herald, Montjoye, king-at-arms, and other heralds, French and English. "It is not we," he said, "who have made this great slaughter, but the omnipotent God, and, as we believe, as a punishment for the sins of the French." He then asked Montjoye, "To whom does this victory belong—to me, or to the King of France?" "To you, sire," was Montjoye's answer. Then looking round him, he saw the turrets of a castle rising out of the wooded hollow in which lay the village of Agincourt. "What castle is that?" he asked. He was told that it was the

castle of Agincourt. "Well, then," said he, "since all battles should bear the name of the fortress nearest to the spot where they were fought, this battle shall from henceforth bear the ever durable name of Agincourt."

The French loss was enormous. Monstrelet gives a long list of the chief princes and nobles who fell on that fatal field. It contains, doubtless, some errors; but it has the look of having been prepared after careful inquiry. Hence we are disposed to trust his estimate, which, including princes, knights, and men-at-arms of every degree, he puts at ten thousand. The loss at Crecy, if we may trust Froissart, who, however, was not there writing of his own knowledge, had indeed been much greater, for more than thirty thousand men had been then left dead on the field. But of these not more than twelve hundred were nobles and knights, whereas at Agincourt, out of the ten thousand only sixteen hundred are said to have been "of low degree." One hundred and six-score banners are also said to have been taken.

Besides the Duke d'Alençon, whose death has been described above, there fell two brothers of the Duke of Burgundy, Charles d'Albret, Constable of France, the Admiral of France, and the Master of the King's Household. Three hundred others of the slain were persons of sufficient importance to make Monstrelet give their names and titles. The number of knights and gentlemen taken prisoners was fifteen hundred. Among them were Charles, Duke of Orleans, and the Duke of Bourbon, both princes of the blood-royal. Henry, it will be seen, attached much importance to their capture.

Monstrelet puts the English loss at sixteen hundred. The principal persons among the dead were the Duke of York, who is said to have been crushed to death in the throng, and Michael de la Pole, the young Earl of Suffolk. Walsingham's estimate is improbable. Besides York and Suffolk he says that only one squire (David Gam by name), four men-at-arms, and twenty-eight common soldiers fell. It seems impossible that several hours of severe fighting between two armies, fairly matched in armour and equipment, should not have resulted in greater loss to the conquerors. His estimate of the French loss is also much smaller than Monstrelet's: "Of great lords," he writes, "there fell to the number of nearly one hundred, and of soldiers and men-at-arms four thousand and sixty-nine." He also reduces the number of prisoners to seven hundred; and on this point he would very probably have better means of information than Monstrelet.

The English army remained on the field of battle till it was quite clear that nothing more was to be feared from the enemy, and then they returned to the village of Maisoncelles, their quarters on the previous night. The next morning they again visited the scene of their victory. All the French they found there alive were put to death or made prisoners—a significant comment on what has been said above as to the slaughter of the prisoners. To kill the wounded is now considered an atrocity which no civilised enemy would commit. In the fifteenth century it was evidently the usual alternative when the wounded person was not likely to turn out a profitable prisoner. The chronicler mentions it as a matter of course, without so much as a hint of blame.

Nothing more conclusively shows the absolute collapse of the French Government than the neglect of the field of battle. For nearly a week the dead were left uncared for. The most valuable parts of the spoil had been carried off by the English. "The greater part of the armour," writes Monstrelet, "was untouched on the dead bodies, but it did not long remain thus, for it was very soon stripped off, and even the shirts and all other parts of their dress were carried off by the peasants of the neighbouring villages. The bodies were left exposed, as naked as when they were born." The remains of the great nobles were indeed carried away—some to be buried in the Church of the Friars Minor in the neighbouring town of Hesdin; others were taken to their own homes in various parts of France. At last the compassion of the Count of Charolois, eldest son of the Duke of Burgundy, was moved by the deplorable spectacle. By his orders the bodies still left on the field, to the number of five thousand eight hundred, were interred in three trenches twelve feet wide, dug within a measured square of twenty-five yards, which was surrounded by a thorn hedge strong enough to keep out wolves and wild dogs. The enclosure still remains, a small wooded clump among the rich corn-fields of the upland of Agincourt. Within it stands a pillar erected some few years ago by the lord of the neighbouring manor, the Marquis of Tramecourt, himself a descendant of one who fought at the battle, and had the good fortune to escape with both life and liberty.

CHAPTER X

AFTER AGINCOURT

BRILLIANT as was the victory which Henry had won at Agincourt, it had, it may be said, no immediate results. The English king was not in a position to follow it up. His loss on the field of battle had, as we have seen, been considerable—amounting to nearly a sixth of his army, if we are to accept the smaller estimate of his numbers, to a twelfth, if we take the larger. Nor is it likely that the sickness which had already so terribly diminished his force had altogether ceased. We are indeed expressly told that the soldiers were "sorely fatigued by their efforts in the battle, and greatly troubled by famine and other wants." But, indeed, so sagacious and far-seeing a general could never have contemplated any other result. He had, in truth, got all that he could have hoped for. He had done what he had said he would do. He had marched from his town of Harfleur to his town of Calais, and all the hosts which the King of France had gathered to bar his way had been scattered before him. This chivalrous, even rash, undertaking had been accomplished, and accomplished with a success so splendid that it had seemed to be the very wisest thing that he could have done. He had not, it is true,

achieved anything more towards the actual conquest of French territory than had been achieved on the day when Harfleur surrendered, but in prestige and in all that prestige can effect he had gained immensely. The glories of Crecy and Poictiers, dimmed by sixty years of feebleness and dissension, had been revived. Englishmen had again found that they could conquer even against desperate odds; and they had learnt that they had a captain at their head who was at least the equal in skill and courage of the greatest of those who had gone before him. Though the close of the day of Agincourt did not leave the conqueror in possession of one foot more of French soil than he had owned at its beginning, it brought him sensibly nearer to the end of his ambition, the crown of France. Any attempt to seize it at once would have been sheer madness. If he had ventured on a march to Paris, even the broken and dispirited remnant of the French army would have been sufficient to crush his feeble force. His policy was to wait, to gather fresh strength for a renewed effort. Meanwhile the profound discouragement that could not but be the result of a defeat so disastrous, suffered in circumstances so discreditable, would sink into the minds of his adversaries. Other causes, too, would be at work, the force of which he was shrewd enough to foresee. Dissension and jealousy were rife among the governing classes of France. Neither of the great feudatories of the French crown had been present at the battle of Agincourt. Two brothers of the Duke of Burgundy were there and fell in the conflict, but the Duke himself was absent, and absent, it would seem, of set purpose. The Duke of Britanny would have been

present, says Monstrelet, if the battle had been delayed till the Saturday. But his tardy movements, in view of the ample notice which he must have received, are suspicious. As for the governed, there was a general feeling among them that they could not suffer more from the rule of the English than they were suffering already from their own princes and lords.

Henry's course, then, after the victory was plain. Before everything acknowledgment must be made to God. Accordingly a service of solemn thanksgiving was performed by the clergy on the field. The Psalm *In Exitu Israel* ("When Israel came out of Egypt") was chanted, and when the singers came to the words "Not unto us, not unto us," every man knelt on the ground: the *Te Deum* followed. Then the army resumed its interrupted march to Calais, which was about forty miles distant. At Calais a council of war was held, and the resolution to return to England unanimously taken. A few days were allowed for refreshment, and about the middle of November the army embarked. The passage of the Channel was effected without loss; but though the wind was favourable, the sea was, as usual, rough, and the French prisoners, the chief of whom were carried in the King's ship, declared that their sufferings were not less than those which they had endured on the disastrous day of Agincourt. They regarded with nothing less than astonishment the cheerful unconcern of Henry.

When the fleet reached Dover the people gave it a triumphant reception. Many of the citizens waded out to the royal ship, anxious to carry their King to shore. The streets were crowded with persons, religious as well as lay, who had gathered to do him honour. After

some days spent at Dover, Henry proceeded to London. There, of course, a still more magnificent reception awaited him. The mayor and aldermen, with a vast throng of citizens, came out to meet him, and the scene in the city recalled the splendours of a Roman triumph. Banners inscribed with the achievements of the conqueror's predecessors were displayed at the gates and in the streets, as if to show that his victories were to be ranked with theirs. The conduits ran with wine. Platforms were erected and hung with splendid draping, on which boys, habited like angels, sang the praises of the King. The people were especially anxious for a sight of the helmet still bearing the dint of that mighty stroke with which Alençon had almost changed the fortune of the day; but Henry's modesty would not allow it or the rest of his armour to be exhibited. The same enthusiastic welcome was given to him in other places which he visited in the course of the next few weeks.

Among these festivities those who had fallen were not forgotten. On December 1st a solemn service, attended by a multitude of great ecclesiastics from all parts of the kingdom, was held in memory of the Duke of York and others, French as well as English, who had fallen at Agincourt. The King's uncle, the Earl of Dorset, came over from Harfleur, of which place he had been made governor, to attend it. The news that he brought from France was so far satisfactory that he could report another victory over the French; but it was clear that, if the enemy already ventured to show himself so near to the English possessions, the work of conquest had yet to be done.

For this work preparations on the largest scale had to be made. After keeping his Christmas at Lambeth, the King issued writs for a new Parliament. This met at Westminster on March 16th, and was exhorted by the Lord Chancellor (Bishop of Winchester) to assist the King in the completion of an enterprise which had been already so well begun. Accordingly the Commons voted, with the assent of the Lords and spiritual Peers, that the subsidies granted in the previous year should be collected sooner than had been before ordered, made a grant of equal amount for the year to come, and, in addition, gave the King tonnage and poundage for the safeguard of the sea, and settled on him for life the duties on wool and leather.

Henry's attitude to his Parliaments remained, so far as we can judge, judicious and firm. It would be a mistake to suppose that the petitions which they presented to the sovereign always or even commonly represented a popular demand. They were oligarchical assemblies, and the interests which they asserted were often the interests of a class. The Crown might often be compelled to assert the right of those who were not represented by churchmen and barons on the one hand, or by knights of the shire and burgesses on the other. This was a duty which Henry seems not to have neglected. He certainly enjoyed what may fairly be called an unprecedented popularity. His Parliaments were invariably complaisant, and his people were enthusiastically attached to him. Dangers that would have seriously threatened a throne less firmly established in the affections of the natives passed by and did no harm. Neither the badness of his title to the crown,

nor the anger of the Lollards, who conceived themselves betrayed by his House, nor the expenses of a costly war did anything to compromise his position. It would not be possible to find a greater contrast than was presented between France, distracted by factions struggling for the power which a lunatic king dropped from his hands, and England, harmonious and enthusiastic, welcoming back after a brilliant victory its vigorous prince, and united in giving him all the help that he demanded. If the darling scheme of the Plantagenets, the union of the two crowns, had been within the limits of possibility, Henry would certainly have effected it.

While the King was making preparations for another effort, a desultory warfare and negotiations for peace were going on simultaneously. In the May of 1416 an illustrious negotiator appeared upon the scene. Sigismund, King of the Romans, aspired to perform the functions of a moderator of European affairs—functions which he doubtless regarded as belonging to the imperial dignity. He had taken a principal share in bringing together the Council of Constance, which was to put an end to the scandalous Papal schism and to restore unity to the doctrine of Christendom. He now conceived the idea of bringing about a reconciliation between the rulers of France and England. After paying a visit to Paris he pursued his journey to England. Henry, always fond of magnificence, gave him splendid entertainment. But he was careful to let it be understood that he admitted no imperial pretensions which might interfere with his own sovereign rights. A story was brought to England of Sigismund's behaviour in Paris from which it was gathered

that such pretensions might possibly be put forward. The Emperor-elect had knighted an esquire who was a subject of the French king. Whatever he may have meant by the action, which indeed was probably suggested by personal feeling, it undoubtedly implied a very serious claim. Henry had sent to Calais a numerous fleet, which was to convey and escort his guest. When the ship that carried Sigismund approached the English coast, the Duke of Gloucester, with other nobles, rode into the water and demanded, before he was permitted to land, whether he claimed any imperial jurisdiction in England. On assurance being given that he meditated nothing of the kind, he received a royal welcome.

Another visitor who came to England on the same errand was William of Bavaria, Duke of Holland. The Duke of Burgundy also sent a representative, and ambassadors from the French court were present to discuss the conditions of peace. It is not easy, nor indeed is it important, to determine precisely what followed. The parties to the negotiations entered upon them with different objects, and are not likely to have been very frank in their dealings with each other. Henry was not willing to recede from the demands to which he had steadfastly adhered on the eve of Agincourt, when his position was apparently so desperate. He would be satisfied with nothing less than what had been conceded to his great-grandfather, Edward, by the Treaty of Bretigny. It is difficult to believe, even on the testimony of Sigismund, that the French envoys made such a concession. Its effect would have been to undo the work of years, and make the king of France what the king at Paris had been two centuries before.

In September Henry accompanied his imperial guest to Calais, where they were met by the Duke of Burgundy. A treaty was drawn up by which it was stipulated that the Duke should assist the English king in his proposed conquest of France, and should have in return a share of the spoil. But it was not executed. The Duke shrank from committing himself to a course of action so unprincipled, and indeed so perilous to himself, for his best hope of independence lay in the rivalry between France and England. But though the treaty was not executed, the very fact of the meeting at which it had been discussed did much to serve Henry's purpose. It increased the dislike and suspicion which the party that was in power in France already entertained for the Duke.

Meanwhile hostilities, which there is no need to describe in detail, had been going on. The Earl of Dorset (soon afterwards created Duke of Exeter), who was in command of the garrison at Harfleur, made a plundering expedition into the adjoining country, and found some difficulty in making his way back. In May the French made a retaliatory expedition against the southern shore of England, and ravaged the island of Portland. Later in the year Harfleur itself was besieged, and though it was twice successfully relieved, the fact made it evident that so far France remained unconquered. It is said that Henry was bent on conducting one of these relieving expeditions in person, but was dissuaded by his new friend Sigismund on the ground that the enterprise was not sufficiently important to call for his interference. Whatever the cause, he remained at home, organising his forces, collecting by whatever means were available—some of them,

one cannot but think, not altogether creditable—the necessary funds, and generally preparing himself for an effort that should be final and conclusive. Early in 1417 he sent letters under the Privy Seal addressed to the nobles and gentlemen of the country, enjoining their attendance, either in person or by deputy, and making inquiry what number of men they could bring into the field. Further instructions were given a little later in the year to the effect that all persons so serving should attend at court and execute the indentures which should secure them their pay. Special attention was paid to the efficiency of the force of archers, and orders were issued to the sheriffs, enjoining the supply of a certain quantity of goose-quills for the feathering of the arrows.

Henry's relations with the Duke of Burgundy naturally occupied much of his attention. It was the Duke's Flemish possessions that brought him and the English king together. The trade between the Flemings and the English was a matter of great importance to both nations, and possibly of supreme importance to the former. Hence a treaty that gave it as much safety as was attainable was sure to be popular. The Duke sent ambassadors to England early in the year, when the truce concluded in 1416 was further extended. It was specially provided that no ships of war intended to act against the territories of either of the contracting parties should be fitted out in their ports, and no ships taken by pirates should be taken into such ports. The treaty was ratified in the month of August, and not till then did Henry feel himself ready to start on his second campaign, though he had named June 24th as the day of gathering at Southampton.

CHAPTER XI

HENRY AND THE LOLLARDS

It might have been supposed that Henry's family associations would have led him to a certain sympathy with the aims of the party which looked up to Wickliffe as its principal leader; nor is it unlikely that something of a sense of ingratitude was aroused by the adverse course of action which was followed by his father and himself. John of Gaunt had been at one time the strong supporter of Wickliffe. On the famous day when the reformer was arraigned before the princes and prelates of England, the Duke of Lancaster had stood by his side and had virtually saved him.

Whatever may have been the Duke's motive in taking up this attitude, it was one which he was not able nor perhaps willing to maintain. It certainly did not make him popular; indeed it is possible that the Lollards themselves were not generally popular. Anyhow he was one of the most hated men in England when Wat Tyler's insurrection broke out. His palace in the Savoy was burned, and he himself narrowly escaped with his life. During his latter years we find no traces of championship of the Lollards.

The discontent of this party with the established

order of things was probably one of the causes which led to the establishment of the house of Lancaster on the English throne. If so, any services that were rendered by the party were ill repaid. When Henry the Fourth came to the throne he found himself under considerable obligations to Thomas Arundel, who had been expelled from the see of Canterbury, and who now received it again. Arundel was vehemently opposed to the new ways of thinking, and took an active part in the measures — measures of a severity unprecedented in England—which were taken to suppress them.

It has been suggested that among the faults of which Henry made confession after he succeeded to the throne was a favourable reception which his conscience accused him of giving to heretical opinions. The suggestion cannot be said to be founded on anything like evidence. Theological errors are not the usual temptation of a young prince, and there is nothing in Henry's after-life to make us fancy that in his youth he was inclined to freedom of thought. All that we know of him would rather incline us to a contrary belief. There is, however, the fact that there was some relation, perhaps we may say, of personal friendship between Henry and the Lollard leader, Oldcastle.

Sir John Oldcastle, sometimes styled Lord Cobham, as having married the heiress of that peerage, was a distinguished soldier who had served in the campaigns of the reign of Henry the Fourth. It is probable, though we do not know for certain, that he was associated with the young Prince during a part at least of his operations on the Welsh borders. Henry must have appreciated his qualities as a soldier; at any rate, the

action that he took with respect to him indicates, as we shall see, some amount of personal interest. Walsingham, indeed, expressly says that he was Henry's *familiaris*, or, we may say, intimate friend.

In Henry's first year, Convocation requested the Archbishop of Canterbury to proceed against Sir John Oldcastle for offences against ecclesiastical law and for heresy. The Archbishop was willing enough to act, but did not care to do so without permission of the King, of whose friendship for the accused he was aware. He represented the matter to the King, and the King, sending for Oldcastle, bade him attend at court to recant his heretical opinions. His arguments and remonstrances were of no avail; Oldcastle was willing to render him all obedience and service in temporal things, but to the Pope and his commands he owed no allegiance. The King, finding him immovable, remitted him to the judgment of the Ecclesiastical Court.

It is needless to relate in detail the proceedings which followed. Oldcastle, still dissatisfied with the tribunal before which he was to appear, again appealed to the King. First he presented to him a statement of the articles of his belief. Henry refused to receive it. He then offered to bring a hundred knights and esquires who would clear him, it is to be presumed, by challenge of battle. This proposal was rejected, but Henry admitted him to a private interview. He again pleaded to have his cause tried by the King in person. The King repeated his refusal, this time with some irritation: the accused, he said, could not have all things ordered after his own pleasure: the Archbishop ought to be, and should be, his judge. Meanwhile, till the

time came for him to stand his trial, he must be kept a prisoner in the Tower.

The trial, of which a complete account has been preserved, was held on September 23rd. Oldcastle was of course condemned, and delivered over to punishment by the secular arm. Time, however, was given him to reconsider his opinions, and he was again committed to the Tower.

What followed, it is impossible to say with any certainty. Oldcastle, we know, escaped from the Tower, but the insurrection which is said to have been made by some of his friends and followers is a matter involved in great mystery. That the King apprehended some danger is manifest. On December 4th we find him sending orders to certain magistrates enjoining them to arrest various persons whom he had otherwise named to them. There is also record of a pardon granted to a person who had given intimation of the conspiracy, and of a pension settled upon him for life in reward of his services. Early in the next month a proclamation was sent out, offering large rewards for the arrest of Sir John Oldcastle, who had escaped from the Tower.

So much we know from documents of State. To what overt acts the conspirators proceeded, if conspirators there were, is not so clear. Walsingham gives a circumstantial account of the affair, which, omitting his reflections, is as follows :

"The King kept Christmas duly at Eltham, and there the Lollards, making a conspiracy, resolved to take or slay the King unawares with his brothers. But certain of the conspirators warned the King of his danger, so that the King quietly removed himself to Westminster, that place being safer and

more populous. The Lollards met at nightfall in the fields that are called St. Giles', near to London, where it was reported that Sir John Oldcastle was waiting for his followers. You might see crowds of men hurrying throughout the streets, who had been drawn from all the counties of the realm by great promises of reward. All these, being asked why they made such haste, declared that they were going to meet the Lord Cobham, who had hired them at his own costs. But the King, knowing what had been done, bade his followers arm themselves. Some counselled delay, but the King would not listen to them, having heard that the rebels purposed, if they should prevail, to destroy straightway the monasteries of Westminster, of St. Albans, and St. Paul, and all the Friars' houses in London. Hereupon a proclamation was issued, offering a general pardon to all persons that had preached heretical doctrines and had plotted against the King's life. But Sir John Oldcastle and eight others, these eight being prisoners in the Tower, were exempted by name. For this cause the King proceeding to the said Fields, against the advice of his people, some time after midnight, waited for what the next day might bring forth. Many who sought the camp of the Lord Cobham came unawares into the King's camp, and were so taken prisoners. The chief of the rebels heard how that the King had come with a strong army, and had taken many of their men. They were much troubled also that no one came to join them out of the city, from which they had looked for many thousands. For the King had given orders that the gates should be shut and be kept close, that none save such as were known to be of his party might go forth. And indeed 'tis said that had he not so done, there would have gone forth of servants and apprentices as many as fifty thousand. Thereupon the Lollards took to flight. As for their leader, none knew to what place he had betaken himself, for though the King offered a thousand marks to any who should give him up, yet no one was found who for so great a reward would give him up."

That this is the account of an unfriendly historian need not be said. It is more to the point to remark

that for most of his narrative Walsingham relies upon hearsay. And even so, there is not a syllable said about armed resistance. That there was a great concourse of people may be taken as certain, as also that they were called together by sympathy for their leader. That they meditated any designs against the King is not by any means so clear. Henry had all a soldier's impatience of such gatherings; nor was he yet so assured of his throne as he shortly became. He may have been justified in apprehending a danger which yet, after all, may not have really existed.

Walsingham was a monk, and wrote from a monk's point of view. Titus Livius, who, though not a contemporary, must have heard many contemporaries discuss the matter, says simply that the King, having learnt on Twelfth-day that certain persons had assembled in a field at the back of St. Giles' Church, led some soldiers against them, who easily dispersed them, killing some and taking others prisoners.

His words read like the account of an attack upon a body of unarmed men. It is noticeable that the punishment which followed was punishment for heresy, not for treason; and it is expressly stated that priests as well as laymen suffered. The rest of the story may be briefly told. Oldcastle remained at large for nearly four years. Walsingham reports him to have attempted a rising on the occasion of Henry's departure on his French expedition, and mentions rumour of a plot which he had formed against the King's person in the beginning of 1417, and of negotiations with the Scots later on in the same year. The monk clearly saw the hand of the arch-Lollard and his followers whenever there was any

mischief going on. The end came not many weeks after. He was captured in Wales after what would seem to have been a fierce resistance, for several of his captors as well as the prisoner himself were wounded. Taken to London, he was brought before Parliament, the session being specially prolonged in order that his case might be heard. The proceedings that followed cannot be described as a trial. He was asked what he had to say on his behalf why he should not be condemned. His answer seemed to be irrelevant to his judges, and the Duke of Bedford, who was acting as Regent, bade him keep to the point. His doom was sealed, if indeed it had not been fixed before, when he denied the jurisdiction of his judges, and declared that he would answer only to his liege-lord Richard, then alive in Scotland. He suffered death by burning, being hung on a chain fastened to a gallows, while a fire was lighted beneath. Of the special barbarity of this punishment Henry may be acquitted. He was absent in France; nor is it likely that the execution was delayed till he could be consulted. We may even believe that it would not have been allowed had he been in England. Indifferent as he was to suffering, and relentless where any military necessity was concerned, he was not cruel, and would hardly have ordered the torture of a brave soldier for whom he had once had some personal regard. But there is no reason to suppose that he would have spared Oldcastle's life. There was a growing severity in the treatment of heresy, and he was quite in accord with it. Shocking as such severity seems to us now, it was one of the ways in which the religious earnestness of the age expressed itself. The Council of Constance, while active to

cleanse the Church of abuses, saw, we cannot doubt, a cognate duty in sternly repressing what it considered the vagaries of heresy. The safe-conduct of Sigismund had not protected John Hus from this orthodox zeal; nor is there any reason to suppose that this postponement of good faith to a pious duty called forth anything more than a transient feeling of self-reproach. The "blush of Sigismund" has become historical; but this Prince seems to have soon recovered his self-satisfaction; nor did the perjury committed in the interests of the true faith make him a less honoured guest or less trusted adviser of the English king. Henry, in fact, though he may be acquitted of any personal barbarity, was in full accord with the spirit which sent Sir John Oldcastle to the stake.

CHAPTER XII

HENRY AND QUEEN JOANNA

THERE is a strange episode in Henry's history which cannot be passed over, but about which it is difficult to form any satisfactory conclusion. This episode concerns his relations with his stepmother, Joanna of Navarre. I deal with it now, though it belongs by right to a later period of the narrative, because when this is disposed of, nothing need interrupt the story of Henry's career as a conqueror.

Under the year 1419 Walsingham writes: "In this year the King's stepmother, Queen Anne, was accused by certain persons of some wickedness that she had contrived to the injury of the King. All her attendants were removed, and she was committed to the custody of Sir John Pelham, who, hiring five new attendants, put her into the castle of Pevensey, there to be kept under his control."

At Pevensey Queen Joanna remained till within a few weeks of Henry's death. On July 13th, 1422, the King made a communication to the Council at home to the following effect:—That for reasons known to them he had for a time taken into his own hand the dower of his mother, Queen Joanna; that, doubting whether it

would not be a charge on his conscience to keep the said dowry any longer, and being indeed advised not to suffer such a charge to lie, he now instructed them to make deliverance unto the said Queen wholly of her said dower. She was to appoint her own servants, so that they were the King's liegemen. All her furniture was to be delivered to her again. She was to have five or six gowns of cloth, and of such colour as she was used to wear. As she would not choose to remain in the place where she then was, she might have horses for eleven cars to remove her goods, and she might go to any place which she might choose.

It is not difficult to see causes of an estrangement between the Queen and her stepson. Her eldest son, the Duke of Britanny, had been expected to become a warm ally of the English in the war against France. He had disappointed this hope. It would even seem that it was only by an accident that he had not fought against Henry at Agincourt. Her second son, Arthur, though an English subject, as having done homage for the earldom of Richmond, had been actually taken prisoner in that battle. Some accounts even represent him as having made an attack on the English camp during the night of the 24th of October. The Duke d'Alençon was her son-in-law. Charles of Navarre, Constable of France, was her brother. A lady so closely connected with the enemy might well become an object of suspicion. And she was, or had been, unpopular in England. Parliament had complained of the foreigners whom she kept about her person, and with such effect that the King (Henry the Fourth) had dismissed all but a few. But one cannot help thinking that her dowry had more to do with the

matter than anything else. Henry, compelled even to pawn the royal jewels for the expenses of his expedition, may have looked with coveting eyes on his stepmother's wealth, wealth which she seems to have been careful to save, and even to increase by trade. A jointure of ten thousand marks had been settled on her by the House of Commons in 1406. She enjoyed, in addition, a large income as Dowager-Duchess of Britanny. We hear of various trading ventures, especially of the export of ore from certain lead mines which her second husband had granted her. Special privileges as regards export and import duties seem also to have been accorded to her. On the other hand, it has been pointed out that her charities were unusually small for a person of her exalted station. On the whole the impression is left that she had both the opportunity and the will to accumulate wealth. Such accumulations, if they existed, could hardly have failed to attract the attention of a sovereign who was doing all that he could to procure the sinews of war. Indeed we hear of Henry directing one of his officials to send all the money that he could possibly borrow from the dower of Joanna the Queen, leaving her only money enough for her reasonable expenses and to pay any annuities that she might have granted. This injunction was followed in the same year by the arrest of the Queen. It is not unlikely that she resisted the attempt to extort the money, and that her resistance was punished by the accusation which Walsingham records. The crime charged against her was probably sorcery: "she had compassed," it was said, "the death of our lord the King in the most high and horrible manner that could be imagined." On the Parliamentary roll that

contains this statement there follows with suspicious promptitude the confiscation of all the accused person's property.

Henry was not in England at the time when this happened, but he cannot be acquitted of responsibility in the matter. It is certain that when he returned he did nothing to redress his stepmother's wrongs. This was left, as has been said, till nearly the end of his life, when her imprisonment had lasted for more than three years. The only excuse that can be offered is that he probably regarded the confiscation of Joanna's wealth as a military necessity; and where a military necessity was concerned, no other considerations were allowed to interfere with his action.

CHAPTER XIII

THE SECOND CAMPAIGN IN FRANCE

THE time was now come when Henry was to make his great effort for the conquest of France. The first necessity was to provide for the safe passage of the army by clearing the Channel of the enemy's ships. This was done by the Earl of Huntingdon. He met nine ships, which had been hired by the French king from the Republic of Genoa, sank three of them, and captured three more with their admiral and a large sum of money. On July 23rd the army started from Southampton. In addition to one thousand pioneers and other workmen, it numbered twenty-five thousand five hundred and twenty-eight combatants, of whom between sixteen and seventeen thousand were men-at-arms. The transporting fleet consisted of about fifteen hundred ships of all sizes.

No attempt was made to oppose the landing of the army. The disaster of Agincourt had so far broken the courage of the French that they had no idea of meeting the English in the field. The plan of campaign seems to have been that the fortified towns should be garrisoned as strongly as possible, and the invading force left to exhaust itself by the effort of taking them. Two or three sieges, as costly to the conquerors as that of

Harfleur had been, would leave little to be done by way of active operations for the defence of the country. The plan, we shall see, failed of success. Henry was earlier in the field than he had been in the campaign of Agincourt, his army was better furnished for siege operations, he had acquired new experience, and he had the advantage of a more favourable season.

Castles and walled towns fell in rapid succession into the hands of the English. Touques, a royal castle, which was the first to be assaulted, offered some resistance. The garrison made a vigorous sally upon the besiegers, and held out for two days against the incessant cannonade with which it was plied. But on August 3rd (the army had landed on the first of the month) it was agreed that if the place were not relieved in six days it should be surrendered. Relieving force indeed there was none, and the scattered garrisons throughout Normandy soon realised the hopelessness of their situation. Damvilliers, Harcourt, Evreux, and other places were surrendered without a struggle. Monstrelet says that the other towns in the duchy were astonished at the facility of the English conquests, and that scarcely any place attempted a defence. And he goes on to give a reason which must have been at least as potent for this result as any demoralisation caused by the remembrance of the English victories. It was due, he says, to the divisions among the nobles, some of whom were for the King and some for the Duke of Burgundy, and each party was in consequence fearful of trusting the other. Moreover, the Constable had drawn off most of the forces in the district to be ready to act against the Duke, who was daily expected with a large army.

Not the least important factor in Henry's success was the admirable order in which he kept his army. All violence and plunder were forbidden. Ecclesiastical persons were put, as might be expected, under a special protection, and to insult or rob one of this privileged class was an offence to be punished with death. To the laity was offered a similar protection if they would own the English king's authority. This policy, carried out with the unflinching firmness which was one of Henry's characteristics, at once secured the kindly feeling of the population and made the army a more effective instrument.

About the middle of August Henry commenced the siege of Caen. Anticipating that the garrison would destroy the suburbs and so deprive him of the cover by help of which he could approach the town, he sent the Duke of Clarence with a strong force to occupy them. The Duke was just in time to save them from being burnt. Henry's character for piety may have had something to do in gaining for him another advantage. The French forces had occupied St. Stephen's Abbey, which lay outside the town. On the approach of the English they resolved to destroy it. The monks, on the other hand, were bent on saving it; and they did so by secretly introducing an English force.

On the King's arrival before the town, an attempt was made to carry it by assault. The storming parties were repulsed with heavy loss. Henry then set his engineers to work. Mines were carried up to the walls, which were also battered by the cannon. When all was ready for an assault, he offered terms to the garrison. They were refused. The next morning the assault was

delivered, every detail of the operation having been first carefully arranged by the King. It was completely successful, the attacking parties making their way into the town on both sides, and this without any great loss. From first to last the siege did not cost the English more than five hundred men, a number which contrasts strongly with the almost disastrous expense that had attended the capture of Harfleur. Henry, after duly returning thanks in the cathedral, proceeded to deal with the conquered town. The castle, which still held out, was admitted to surrender on certain conditions if not relieved in twelve days' time. The inhabitants generally were mercifully treated. Indeed Henry's conduct so raised his reputation for clemency that many neighbouring towns at once offered to capitulate. As usual, however, nothing was allowed to interfere with military policy. Caen was to be made a garrison, and accordingly fifteen hundred "women and impotent people, who were unserviceable and useless," were sent out of it.

After the fall of Caen, Lisieux, Alençon, and many other places capitulated without making any attempt at resistance. A more important gain than the possession of any city or fortress was the adherence of the Duke of Britanny. On October 27th this Prince came under safe-conduct to a conference with Henry. The terms of their agreement were not precisely known; but it was certain that a truce was made which was to be in force till the following Michaelmas. It was also reported that the Duke kneeled to the King as to his suzerain, and offered to hold Britanny as a fief under the English crown, or rather the French crown as now united with that of England. Falaise, which was sur-

rendered on January 2nd, was the last conquest of the year 1417. The castle did not capitulate until six weeks later.

It would be unnecessary to relate in detail the military operations that now followed in uninterrupted succession. During the first weeks of the new year (1417-18) Henry was active in the field, and though, with the devoutness which so strongly characterised him, he spent Lent in strict retirement, his brothers were busily employed. The great successes of the year were won at Cherbourg and Rouen. Cherbourg was taken by the Duke of Gloucester, aided by a force which the King had ordered to be despatched from some of the western harbours of England. The mere sight of its approach is said to have determined the surrender of the garrison. The siege of Rouen was one of the most important operations of the war, and as it was carried on throughout under Henry's superintendence it demands a more particular notice.

In May the King left Bayeux and marched up the southern bank of the Seine. His first object was to possess himself of the strong position of Pont de l'Arche, situate about eight miles above Rouen, and commonly called the Key of the River. The bridge itself was held by the French in such strength that it could not have been forced without a great sacrifice of men. Henry accordingly marched some three miles lower down the stream to a place where it was divided by an island. The French followed him. While their attention was distracted by a feint (one of the ingenious stratagems with which great commanders are so ready), the island was occupied by a small force of English gunners. A

cannonade drove away the troops that had been left to guard the passage, and some thousands of men then crossed without meeting any resistance. Henry now held both banks of the Seine. He constructed a bridge of boats to join his two camps, and in about three weeks' time received the capitulation of Pont de l'Arche. Leaving a considerable garrison in it, he proceeded to invest Rouen, which was now practically isolated from the rest of France. It was a great, and, considering the strength of the place, even a perilous enterprise. But success would be of inestimable value : the possession of Rouen would mean the acquisition of Normandy.

The place was very strong. It lay, not, as now, on both sides of the river, always a circumstance adverse to effective defence, but wholly on the northern side. The walls were high and strong, and well supplied with artillery, with cannons of a size then unusual, and with catapults, an engine of war which the invention of gunpowder had not yet driven out of use. The garrison again was unusually large. There was a local militia numbering at least fifteen thousand men, and a force of not less than seven thousand regular troops and artillerymen. On the other hand, the provisioning of so large a force would in any circumstances have been a matter of difficulty. As it was, this difficulty was enormously increased by circumstances which Henry had doubtless taken into account. To the usual population of the town was added a multitude of country-folk who had flocked in from the neighbourhood to avail themselves of the shelter of the walls. And the siege was begun so early that the harvest of the year could not be secured.

Henry speedily completed the investment of the land side of the town. Each of the six gates was commanded by a strong fort, and these forts were connected by palisaded trenches. The river was rendered impassable, both above and below, to any relieving force that might attempt to approach the town. Chains and booms were stretched across it, and a flotilla was brought up from Harfleur, part of which, as it would have been dangerous to pass under the guns of the town, was dragged over land to a point above the walls. A body of Welshmen watched the town from the south bank of the river, and many hundreds of Irish kernes, lightly armed and fleet of foot, accompanied the English cavalry in their excursions into the neighbouring country. "The greater part of them," says Monstrelet, "had a stocking and shoe on one foot only, while the other was quite naked. They had targets, short javelins, and a strange sort of knives. Those who were on horseback had no saddles, but rode excellently well on small mountain horses, and were mounted on such panniers as are used by the carriers of corn in parts of France. They were, however, miserably accoutred in comparison with the English, and without any arms which could much hurt the French, whenever they might meet them."

This miscellaneous force was kept by their general under the strictest discipline. He was especially careful to prevent all straggling. The men were rigidly forbidden to lodge outside the military lines; and on one occasion two soldiers who were discovered transgressing this order were summarily executed.

Henry made no assault upon the town. He was too careful of the lives of his men to waste them in so

perilous an enterprise. He contented himself with repelling the frequent sallies of the besieged, which the strength of his lines of circumvallation and the state of readiness in which he always kept his troops enabled him to do without serious loss. He kept his men employed indeed with the construction of siege works, with the driving of mines, and with the construction of systematic approaches to the town ; but his chief reliance was a blockade. The vast population, military and civil, ordinary and extraordinary, that crowded the walls of Rouen could not be long fed on any stores that had been laid up in this place, while effectual measures had been taken against the throwing in of any relief.

The first-fruits of this policy of starvation were seen in the surrender of the fortified post of the Abbey of St. Catherine. This was given up by the force that garrisoned it within a month of the investment of the city, and given up because provisions had failed. Henry's own camp meanwhile was abundantly supplied with provisions, furnished by stores of his own, or brought in by the parties which ravaged the neighbouring country.

Rouen soon began to feel the pressure of famine. Its governor made an attempt to relieve it by expelling from the town twelve thousand non-combatants. Henry refused to let these miserable creatures pass through his lines, and they perished by degrees under the walls. The story of their fate is pitiable in the extreme. Some of them lingered on till the very end of the siege. Many of the soldiers on either side had hearts more tender, or perhaps it should be said intelligences less alive to the necessities of the military situation, than the generals who directed the attack and the defence of

Rouen. These secretly supplied the outcasts with such provisions as they could spare. Henry himself departed from the severity of his policy by furnishing the few who were left alive on Christmas Day with a meal. But neither the Governor nor the King relented. It may be mentioned as an incident eminently characteristic of the time, that new-born children were raised in baskets to the top of the walls, duly baptized, and then let down again to perish of hunger.

Henry has been severely blamed for the inhumanity that he is said to have displayed on this occasion. It may be allowed that there have been great soldiers who would sooner have relinquished a military advantage than allow such misery to exist under their eyes, but Henry was not of this type. He was a soldier first; and to his conception of a soldier's duty, which was to use every military advantage that fell in his way, he subordinated everything. For wanton cruelty he had no taste: it did not come within the scope of his business; but from cruelty that was not wanton—that is, was dictated by some consideration of necessity or expediency—he never shrank. There is something, it must be allowed, that is repulsive about this, and it is made more repulsive by the contrast which it makes with Henry's almost ostentatious piety. This is a contrast, however, which is apparent rather than real. Henry's belief that the French crown belonged to him of right was, incredible as it may seem, a genuine conviction, even, it may be said, a religious conviction. This feeling, it may well be believed, still further fortified his heart against any thought of concession to mere human weakness. As far as regards his

military pitilessness he strongly resembles Cæsar and Napoleon.

A messenger from the besieged succeeded in making his way through the English lines and in reaching Paris. He saw the Duke of Burgundy, and delivered in emphatic terms the message of the citizens of Rouen: "If by your negligence we are conquered by the King of England, we shall become the worst and bitterest enemies you have." The Duke promised help, a promise which greatly encouraged the town to persevere in its defence. The oriflamme, the sacred banner of France, was indeed taken from the Abbey of St. Denis later in the year, and an army nominally at least intended to relieve Rouen followed it; but it never approached the town. There was indeed no one to act for France.

This appeal, as has been said, was made to the Duke of Burgundy. The Dauphin meanwhile had opened negotiations for peace with the English king.

A formal peace Henry would not make. To do so would, he conceived, be a renunciation of his claims to the French crown. Indeed he carefully avoided conceding directly to the Dauphin the title of Regent of France: in the commissions which were issued to the English ambassadors he is the "Regent *so-called*." A truce was proposed, which was preliminary to a treaty. The English demands included all the territories mentioned in the great Peace of Bretigny, and Guienne as well. A stipulation was added that if the Duke should refuse to come into this treaty the king of England should march with as many troops as might be necessary to Paris, and deliver that city with the royal family into the hands of the Dauphin. In return for this service

he was to have Flanders, a possession of the Dukes of Burgundy.

In an interesting document Henry sets forth for the consideration of his ambassadors various difficulties which were involved in these proposals. Could he, without prejudice to his right to the crown of France, join arms with the Dauphin? Could he still receive the Duke of Burgundy, should the Duke submit to him? Could he justly invade Flanders while the truce was unexpired? A number of military problems were also suggested. Finally it was asked whether the Dauphin was qualified to conclude a valid truce.

A supplementary commission authorised the ambassadors to treat for the hand of the Princess Katherine; and elaborate instructions were given to them as to their action in case of a partial concession of their demands.

The negotiations went on for a time, if not with success, at least without coming to a manifest end. On one point the Dauphin returned an emphatic answer. He would not join with the English king in acting against the Duke of Burgundy. "I will never make peace," he said, "with the ancient enemy of my country in order to destroy a vassal."

On November 17th the French commissioners, accompanied by the Cardinal d'Ursins, who was to act as mediator, came to Pont de l'Arche, and there met the English ambassadors. After a preliminary difficulty about the language in which the proceedings of the conference should be carried on had been disposed of, the conditions were discussed. The French envoys presented the King with a picture of the Princess Katherine, a present which he is said to have received

with the greatest satisfaction. But he did not abate one jot from his demands, which indeed it is not too much to say he had made of set purpose impossible. He claimed the hand of the Princess Katherine, the duchies of Normandy and Acquitaine, and other principalities, all of them to be held in his own right and without any dependence on the king of France. The French commissioners at once rejected these terms as impossible, and the English retorted by questioning their authority to treat. In the end nothing was done.

Rouen was now left to its fate, and that fate was evidently close at hand. Early in December a sally was planned, it being arranged that two thousand men were to issue simultaneously from each of the gates. The plan was only partially carried out, and though some loss was suffered by the English, nothing of real importance was effected. About the middle of the month a definite intimation was given to the inhabitants of Rouen that they must no longer expect relief. The distress in the town had by that time reached the point of agony. The richest among the citizens were reduced to eating horse-flesh; the poorer were glad to devour dogs and cats, rats and mice. Terrible stories were told that some had eaten human flesh. According to one chronicler, not less than fifty thousand died of starvation during the six months of the siege. The number is incredible, but it is certain that the famine reached an intensity that has seldom been equalled. When the last hope of relief was gone, it became absolutely intolerable. The inhabitants rose in revolt against the magistrates, demanding that negotiations should be immediately opened with the be-

siegers. There was indeed no reason why this should not be done, and on January 2nd the envoys of the town were admitted to Henry's presence. At first he refused to grant any terms: Rouen must open its gates and admit its conqueror. A truce indeed for eight days was allowed; but the days passed without any result being attained. All that the English King would say was that the inhabitants of Rouen must submit themselves absolutely to his mercy. The people then formed a desperate resolution. They would fire their town in several places; a great length of the wall was to be undermined and supported temporarily with props; these were to be suddenly removed, and the whole population was simultaneously to sally forth. All who could bear arms were to fight their way out, while the women and children were to endeavour to make their escape.

Henry then relented. This purpose of the people meant the destruction of Rouen, and he did not wish to lose the chief city of Normandy. He renewed negotiations, and terms of capitulation that were at least tolerable were finally agreed upon. A ransom of three hundred thousand crowns of gold was to be paid, and all material of war was to be delivered to the King. The lives of all persons in the town, with a few named exceptions, were to be granted to them, and all who would swear allegiance to the King should retain their property; others might depart. One noteworthy provision, as indicating Henry's persuasion that he was dealing, not with an enemy, but with rebellious subjects, was that the King should have a space, either within or without the walls, for the building of a palace,

but that he should duly purchase such ground from its owners.

On January 22nd Henry entered the town with his customary show of magnificence. It was noticed, with much speculation as to the meaning of the symbol, that a page rode behind him bearing a lance to which a fox's brush was attached after the manner of a pennon. His first care, as usual, was to return thanks in the cathedral for his victory. That done, he received the homage of the citizens. All but five of the persons excepted from the amnesty were either pardoned or released on payment of a fine. A noted partisan leader, Alan Blanchart, who had treated his prisoners with great cruelty, was beheaded; and the Vicar-General, who had excommunicated the English king, was condemned to imprisonment for life.

The fall of Rouen was soon followed by the submission of the rest of Normandy. Henry at once set himself to the task of administering the province which he had acquired. He kept his court as Duke of Normandy, wearing the robes which belonged to that dignity. The province was to have its proper exchequer and coinage; a standard for measures was established, and regulations were made for the conduct of trade. In the brief opportunities that were given him Henry seems to have showed himself a capable administrator of civil affairs. His new subjects were impressed by the experience of a government more firm and just than that which their native rulers had exercised.

CHAPTER XIV

HENRY'S MARRIAGE

THE first part of the following year (1419) was spent in negotiation. Early in March the Duke of Britanny paid another visit to the King for the purpose of confirming the friendly relations between them. At the same time overtures were made to him by both the parties who claimed to direct the government of France—by the Dauphin [1] on the one hand, and the Duke of Burgundy, acting in the name of King Charles the Sixth, on the other.

The negotiations with the Dauphin came to nothing, nor was it indeed possible that they should have any

[1] Charles the Sixth had twelve children, whom it will be convenient to enumerate:—(1) Charles, died in infancy; (2) Charles, died 1400, at the age of nine; (3) Louis, died December 1415 -though "stout of body, and skilful in arms," he had refused to fight at Agincourt; (4) John, died August 1417; (5) Charles, afterwards Charles the Seventh, the "Dauphin" mentioned in the text; (6) Philip, died in infancy; (7) Isabella, second wife of Richard the Second of England, afterwards married to the Duke of Orleans, who was murdered 1407 at the instigation of the Duke of Burgundy; (8) Jane, died in infancy; (9) Mary, took the veil; (10) Jane, married to the Duke of Britanny; (11) Michelle, married to Philip, Count of Charolois, eldest son of the Duke of Burgundy; (12) Katherine, born October 17th, 1400.

result. Henry persisted in his claim to be king of France ; and if he consented to discuss any other conditions of peace, always reserved this right. The Dauphin, as the eldest son of the reigning king, could not seriously treat with such a claimant. Overtures made on either side could only have been feints. The Duke of Burgundy, on the contrary, had no pretensions that were absolutely irreconcilable with Henry's claim. He had in his power the imbecile King, the Queen, and all the royal family, the Dauphin only excepted. In right of the authority which the King was said to have delegated to him, he claimed to be Regent of France. He would doubtless have wished to be Regent under the imbecile Charles rather than under the vigorous Henry. So far he was adverse to the success of the English king ; but it was quite possible for him to secure out of that success terms advantageous to himself. The accession of the Dauphin, in the probable event of the death of Charles, would make his position untenable. On the whole we may conclude that he was not indisposed to come to an agreement with Henry, but did not see his way to obtaining such an agreement as he wanted.

On May 30th, after various negotiations, which it is needless to relate in detail, a formal meeting took place at Melun. All the arrangements were of the greatest magnificence, and the most rigorous etiquette, dictated doubtless by mutual suspicion, was observed.

On the side of the French came the Duke of Burgundy, Isabeau, Queen of France, and the fair Katherine herself. It was on her charms indeed that the French negotiators relied greatly for their success. All accounts agree in giving the greatest praise to her beauty, though

it is a praise scarcely justified by her portrait. The nose especially is of an excessive length, and falls a little over the mouth, a characteristic of the Valois face; but, says Monstrelet, "King Henry was very anxious to marry her, and not without cause, for she was very handsome, of high birth, and of the most engaging manners." Henry's attachment indeed had something almost romantic about it. There had been many plans of finding an alliance for him, but ever since he had been able to act for himself he had never swerved from his purpose of winning Katherine the Fair of France for his wife. He was now a man of thirty-two, and, if we put aside the dubious reports about the excesses of his youth, we may say that, as far as we know, he had never thought of any woman but her. Marriage to a daughter of France might help him, he thought, to gain the crown; nor was he willing to abate his claim, even in the minor matter of dower, in consideration of Katherine's beauty. Still we cannot doubt that he was a sincere and even ardent lover.

At three in the afternoon Queen Isabeau came out of her tent, the Lords of her Council walking two and two before her, and the Duke of Burgundy leading her by the hand. The Princess Katherine followed, led by the Count of St. Pol. Henry, who was accompanied by his two brothers Clarence and Gloucester, and by his uncles the Duke of Exeter and the Cardinal Beaufort, advanced to meet them. He bowed, took the Queen by the hand, and kissed her. Then he saluted the Princess in the same way. His brothers did the same, but instead of bowing, bent the knee almost to the ground. It was observed that the Duke of Burgundy, in saluting the

King, made the same gesture of respect. The whole party then entered the pavilion that had been prepared for their conference. For all his courtesy Henry did not forget his pretensions. He claimed to have the upper hand of the French queen, and, after a long dispute, had his way. A conference followed, but it was not intended that business should be transacted on that day. This was postponed till the next meeting, which, it was arranged, was to take place on June 1st.

The month was spent in further discussion. We may gather from what has been recorded that Henry was content to fall back, at least for the time, on the terms of the Treaty of Bretigny, and that the French commissioners, on the other hand, sought to minimise their concessions. They could not execute the Treaty of Bretigny, because many of the places named in it were in the hands of the Dauphin. Henry, who had not been allowed another sight of the Princess, was profoundly irritated at the manifest intention on the part of the French negotiators to baffle him, and especially at the way in which they sought to utilise his position as a suitor. His anger broke out in a fierce reply to the Duke of Burgundy, when this prince reproached him with the want of moderation in his demands. "I will have you know," he cried, "that I will not only have your Princess, but your King himself in my power; and that I will obtain the marriage that I seek, or force him from his throne, and drive you out of the kingdom." The Duke replied, "You may say what you please; but I doubt not that before you force him from his throne, or drive me out of France, we shall make you weary of your undertaking."

Another meeting had been fixed for July 3rd; but Henry, coming to attend it, found that the French commissioners had left the place. It seemed that peace was as far off as ever.

The fact was that the Duke of Burgundy was playing a double part. While the conferences at Melun were going on, he had been in frequent communication with the Dauphin. Twelve days after his last conference with Henry, the Dauphin and the Duke met at Pouilly-le-Fort, a place only a league distant from Melun itself. The interview of the two was, to all appearance, cordial and even affectionate. The Duke bowed several times very low, and finally kneeled to the Dauphin, who raised him in the most gracious way from the ground. At parting the Duke insisted on holding the stirrup while the Dauphin mounted. The two princes were to share the administration of the kingdom between them; they were to give each other all the help in their power; they were not to enter into any agreement without mutual consent. The treaty, which was finally concluded on July 29th, was published throughout France.

To Henry, of course, this was a declaration of war. He immediately took the field. The first point of attack was Pontoise in the Isle of France. The town was taken by a surprise, skilfully planned by Henry himself. The English troops arrived in the early morning, scaled the walls before the guard was even aware of their presence, and, after a sharp struggle with the garrison, made themselves masters of the town. Pontoise was a great prize. It contained a great store of war-material and a large sum of money; and it was the only fortified place between the country occupied by Henry and

Paris itself. The King declared in a letter to his Council at home that it was the most important place that he had taken since the beginning of the war. The fact was emphasised in the course of a few days by the appearance of the Duke of Clarence before the walls of Paris.

But Henry's victories, brilliant as they were, could hardly have brought him final success but for the criminal folly of his adversaries. On September 10th the Duke of Burgundy was murdered at the Bridge of Montereau. What share the Dauphin had in this atrocious deed—whether he commanded it and even gave the signal for the assassins to strike, or whether he simply stood by and suffered it to be perpetrated without interfering—scarcely concerns us. Perhaps we may take the more favourable account of Monstrelet, who indeed had the best opportunities for learning the truth. "While these things were passing," he says, "the Dauphin leaned on the barrier, looking on, but soon drew back, as one much frightened." And indeed the Duke had private and public enemies who would not scruple to take his life. One cannot wonder at the violent death of the man who had perpetrated such a deed as the assassination of the Duke of Orleans.

But whether the Dauphin was an accomplice before or after the act, the result was the same. The murder of the Duke gave Henry the crown of France. Paris, where the dead prince had been popular, was furious at his death. The provosts of the city, assembled by the Count of St. Pol, swore a solemn oath that they would employ their lives and fortunes in avenging this execrable deed. The King and Queen renounced their son, and declared their intention of making peace with the king

of England, as the only hope for the country. And, most important of all, Philip, Count of Charolois, eldest son and heir of the murdered Duke, threw himself heart and soul into the English alliance.

The Dauphin withdrew to Poictiers. France south of the Loire was in his hands, but north of that river it substantially belonged to the English king and to his Burgundian ally. During the autumn of 1419 and the following spring there were no military operations of much importance. A desultory warfare was waged with the Dauphin, while, on the other hand, there was a succession of truces between Henry and the party of the French king. Negotiations, meanwhile, went busily on, and this time with a real intention on all sides that they should lead to some result; and this result may be seen in what was called "The Perpetual Peace of Troyes," finally concluded on May 21st. King Charles was to have undisturbed possession of the crown during his life; after his death the crown should go to Henry and his heirs; during Charles's incapacity to reign, Henry should be Regent of France, and should be styled by the King "our most dear son Henry, King of England and heir of France"; the Princess Katherine was to become Queen of England, with the customary annuity of forty thousand crowns.

On the same day that the treaty was finally ratified, the betrothal took place in the Church of St. Peter at Troyes. The Queen of France and the Princess were attended by the Duke of Burgundy and forty of his council. Before the betrothal Isabeau and Henry went together to the high altar, where the articles of peace were read aloud, and both affixed their seals to them. Then

Henry and Katherine joined hands and were contracted, while the Duke of Burgundy took an oath to obey Henry as Regent of France so long as King Charles should live, and after the latter's death, to acknowledge him as his liege-lord. Nine days later, the marriage was celebrated with great magnificence. Henry had attained the object of his ambition—he was Regent and heir of France, and he was the husband of the Fair Katherine.

CHAPTER XV

THE SIEGE OF MELUN

Henry did not give any long time to his honeymoon. The story indeed is told of him that when some English knights asked him whether a tournament should not be included among the festivities of his marriage, he answered that they should have tilting enough, but that it should be tilting in earnest. He was as good as his word, for he was not going to waste the best time for campaigning. Early in June he laid siege to Sens, a Burgundian town of which the Dauphin had possessed himself. Sens capitulated after a resistance of twelve days. From Sens he proceeded to Montereau, the place where the Duke of Burgundy had been murdered. The town was taken with little difficulty, but the castle held out for some days. Henry, loath to waste his time in reducing it, had recourse to a proceeding which is another proof how pitiless was his temper when any military advantage was concerned. Some of the principal prisoners captured in the town were sent to parley with the commander of the citadel. Their lives, they said, depended upon his at once surrendering it; and they represented that he could not hold out long against the overwhelming force of the English king.

The Governor met them with a refusal, and Henry, aware that such threats would lose all efficacy for the future if they were not executed, ordered them all to be hanged. But when, eight days after, the garrison offered to surrender, he granted favourable conditions. He observed what may be called the rules of the game with undeviating strictness. The execution of the prisoners was, according to the notions of the time, within his right; and the Governor was equally within his right in holding out as long as he could. Monstrelet mentions at the same time another incident which illustrates the same aspect of Henry's character. A running footman who always followed his horse, and was a great favourite with him, had the misfortune to kill a knight in a quarrel. The King ordered him at once to be hanged.

The next event of importance was the siege of Melun, a strongly fortified town on the Seine, and of great importance as commanding the passage of the river. Henry, who had recently been joined by his second brother the Duke of Bedford, invested it on one side, and the Duke of Burgundy on the other. It was no easy task which they had undertaken, for they had themselves to be on their guard against attack from without; Meaux and other towns in the neighbourhood were garrisoned by the Dauphin's troops, and frequent sallies were made on the besiegers' trenches. The camps were accordingly strongly fortified. A bridge of boats connected them with one another, and also prevented any relief of the town by water.

The English cannon played upon the walls with such effect that what appeared a practicable breach was

made. Henry's quick eye, however, discovered that the attempt would cost too many lives, and refused to make it, even when urged by the Duke of Burgundy. Another ally who soon afterwards arrived in the camp, the Duke of Bavaria, expressed his surprise that the attempt had not been made. Henry heard him with patience, represented to him his own views, but finally consented that an assault should be delivered. It does not, however, appear that he allowed his own troops to be employed. As commander-in-chief he gave permission to the two Dukes to make the attempt. The storming party from the Burgundian camp advanced boldly to the assault, but was repulsed with great loss.

The next attempt was made by mining. The work was discovered when it was brought close to the walls of the city. A counter-mine was made by the garrison, and before long the two partitions between the two mines were broken down, and the passage, which was now of considerable breadth, became the scene of frequent combats. On one occasion we hear of Henry fighting in person. Monstrelet speaks of him and the Duke of Burgundy engaging two of the Dauphinois "with push of pike." Titus Livius tells a more romantic story, how, entering at the head of his men, he engaged in single combat with the commander of the garrison, the Lord de Barbasan. Neither of them knew the other. After a while they paused. The King asked his antagonist who he was. "I am Barbasan," said he, "and you?" "You have fought," said Henry, "with the King of England." Henry was a stout man-at-arms, and loved the excitement of changing blows; but he did not neglect for this delight the more important duties of

a general, which seldom permit such an indulgence. It is only here and at Agincourt, when indeed a desperate situation demanded his display of personal valour, that we hear of his actual prowess in the field.

Melun held out bravely till far in the winter. Barbasan had strictly forbidden any talk of surrender, and the townspeople lived in hope of relief from the Dauphin. Meanwhile the besiegers were suffering greatly from the same disease that had caused such loss before the walls of Harfleur. The Prince of Orange, too, withdrew all his troops. "He was ready," he declared, "to serve the Duke of Burgundy, but he would not put France under the power of her ancient enemy." But the presence of famine became more and more intolerable, and when towards the end of November a definite message came from the Dauphin that he was not strong enough to attempt a relief, Barbasan proposed a capitulation. The terms granted were not liberal: those who surrendered were to have life but not liberty; they must remain prisoners unless they could give security not to bear arms again against the King of France and his Regent, the King of England. Special exception was made against all who had been concerned in the murder of the Duke of Burgundy. The Governor himself was charged with having been an accomplice in this crime, and remained in prison for nine years. There was a considerable number of Scotch soldiers among the prisoners: these, too, had been exempted from the offer of mercy, and twenty of them were executed. Henry's increased severity was probably due not to any change of temper, but to the feeling that he was now dealing with rebels rather than enemies.

Melun was surrendered at the beginning of December, after holding out between three and four months.

From Melun Henry proceeded to Corbeuil, where the French court had taken up its abode; and from Corbeuil the two Kings, with the Duke of Burgundy, made a solemn entry into Paris, where they were received with what appeared to be an enthusiastic welcome. The first business transacted was to cite and to condemn as contumacious the murderers of the late Duke. The Dauphin, summoned under the title of Charles, Duke of Touraine, was declared to be attainted and convicted of the crime laid to his charge, banished from France, and pronounced for ever incapable of succeeding to the inheritance of the crown or of any dominions that might be acquired for it. Henry thus saw another obstacle to the ambition of his life cleared out of his way. This done, King Charles, sitting in the hall of his palace of St. Paul, publicly declared his assent to the treaty which had given the reversion of the crown to the king of England.

The two sovereigns kept distinct courts. That of Henry was by far the more splendidly equipped and numerously attended of the two. He was the rising sun, and all men looked to him. All offices of trust and profit were at his disposal, and the nobles and gentlemen of France flocked into his ante-chambers. More important visitors than these courtiers were the two Lords of Albret, a family of the highest importance, who offered him their homage as Duke of Acquitaine; and many other great lords, spiritual and temporal, followed their example.

Meanwhile Henry busied himself with the duties of

government. He set himself to redress the grievances and reform the abuses which a time of disorder and division had produced in abundance. He devoted special attention to the coinage, which, to the great injury of trade, had been much debased. At Paris, as in Normandy, his subjects were favourably impressed with the promise of a just and vigorous rule that his civil administration held out.

Shortly after Christmas Henry left Paris for Rouen, where he devoted some days to settling the affairs of the Norman duchy. From Rouen he went to Amiens, and thence again to Calais, crossing over to Dover on February 1st. A few days were spent at Canterbury, and then followed a triumphal entry into London and the coronation of Queen Katherine at Westminster Abbey. The Duke of Clarence had been left as the King's Lieutenant-General in France, but with a special charge as Governor of Normandy. Paris was put under the care of the Duke of Exeter.

CHAPTER XVI

THE LAST CAMPAIGNS

THE coronation of Queen Katherine was performed on February 24th. About a month later came the news of a great disaster to the English arms in France. The Duke of Clarence had been defeated and slain at Beaujé in Anjou. He had made a plundering expedition into that province, and lay at Angers, on the Mayenne, when he heard of the presence of the Dauphin's army a few miles to the east. Misinformed of the real strength of the enemy, or perhaps taught by a long succession of victories to despise him, he hurried to the attack, refusing even to wait till his whole force could be brought up, and riding on with his cavalry only. The details of the conflict that followed are obscure, but the result was a disastrous defeat. The Duke was killed, and with him fifteen hundred, or, according to some accounts, two thousand of his troops, among whom were the Lords Ross and Gray, and the Earls of Huntingdon and Somerset. The honours of the victory belonged to the Scotch, seven thousand of whom were present under command of the Earl of Buchan, youngest son of the Duke of Albany.

And in other ways things were not going well. The

Duke of Exeter's position in Paris was unsafe, while in Northern France, of which the English had seemed to have undisputed possession, the party of the Dauphin was again making head. Henry saw that his presence was imperatively needed, and hastened his preparations for another expedition.

There were signs of exhaustion in the country. It was becoming increasingly difficult to raise both men and money. At least a hundred thousand troops had already crossed the Channel; and the losses, by battle and disease, had been very large. The difficulty of money had, as we have seen, always been serious; and six years of incessant war had greatly increased it. Henry, however, persevered with indomitable energy, and the nation, among whom his popularity seems to have suffered no diminution, seconded his efforts. On June 10th he embarked with an army numbering no less than four thousand men-at-arms and twenty-four thousand archers. This time Dover was his point of departure, and a prosperous voyage brought him to Calais on the same day at noon.

His first care was to relieve the Duke of Exeter. A force of twelve hundred men was at once despatched, and reached Paris without encountering the enemy. The King's presence, indeed, seemed to revive the English cause almost instantaneously throughout Normandy and Northern France. One of the principal operations of the campaign was the relief of Chartres, which the Dauphin had invested while Henry was still in England. On the approach of the English army the French retired without fighting a battle: the victory of Beaujé had not restored the confidence which had

been lost at Agincourt. It is significant to find that in the account of a battle fought in the course of the campaign between the Dauphin and the Duke of Burgundy the chronicler tells us that the French were much encouraged by finding that there were no English in the Duke's army. The capture of Dreux, which was surrendered on August 20th, was also an important gain. Henry—and the fact is a notable proof of his military capacity—had in the course of some ten weeks regained all that had been lost during his absence.

The English arms being again supreme in Northern France, he proceeded to extend the limits of the territory which they occupied, and marched southwards to the Loire. Vendôme fell into his hands, and, after Vendôme, Beaugency. Crossing the Loire, he proceeded as far south as Bourges, where the Dauphin, who steadily persisted in his policy of avoiding a battle, had shut himself up. But Bourges was too strong to be taken except by operations for which Henry had not then the means; and Orleans, still unreduced, was in his rear. A more pressing necessity was the capture of Meaux. As long as this fortress remained in the hands of the Dauphin, the position of the English in Paris was not safe. Meaux was accordingly invested on October 6th. The King left the conduct of the siege for a time in the hands of the Duke of Exeter, and returned to Paris, where many civil matters called for his presence.

The pressure on his supply of troops had now become exceedingly severe. He was forced to enlist large numbers of French soldiers to fill up the gaps in his English army: he sent envoys to the Emperor Sigismund soliciting help in men-at-arms and archers;

and a similar request was also made to John, King of Portugal. In addition to losses in the field and by sickness, four thousand of his men are said to have died of an epidemic in the course of a single march during the campaign on the Loire; and still it was necessary to garrison every town or fortress of military importance that might be won from the enemy. Arthur, younger brother of the Duke of Britanny, who had some time before been released from his long imprisonment, came with a considerable reinforcement to join the army; and after Christmas the Duke of Burgundy paid a visit to the King, who had by that time returned to the camp. But the Duke did not stay long, for a serious family quarrel had arisen between the two Princes. Jacqueline, Duchess of Brabant, had left her husband and taken refuge at the English court, where Henry had welcomed her with assurance of his protection. The Duke of Burgundy, on the other hand, took up the cause of his kinsman the Duke of Brabant with much energy, and a serious difference was the result.

Meanwhile, on December 6th, Queen Katherine had given birth to a son, the unfortunate Henry of Windsor. The King, for some reason that is not explained, found an augury of evil—so at least runs the story—in the fact that Windsor was the birthplace of his heir. He is reported to have said to his chamberlain, "I, Henry born at Monmouth, shall small time reign, and get much: and Henry born at Windsor shall long, long reign, and lose all; but God's will be done." The prophecy, whether made before or after the event, was certainly fulfilled with singular exactness. Perhaps the great conqueror already felt that his own time was short,

and he had certainly had sufficient proof that, when his own presence was withdrawn, things were not likely to go well.

During the winter and early spring the siege of Meaux was vigorously prosecuted. The King had, however, scarcely sufficient troops for the work, the more so as he was more than once obliged to detach a force to serve elsewhere. The Dauphin's troops had surprised Auraches, and it had to be recovered from them. More ominous, as showing the insecurity of the conquests made, was the call for troops in Normandy, where Oliver de Mauny, Lord of Falaise, who had sworn allegiance to the King of England, was ravaging the country. The Dauphin could not relieve Auraches, and De Mauny was taken prisoner; but it was evident that a work of immense difficulty and extent still remained to be done.

Meaux held out for seven months. Its Governor, who went by the name of the Bastard of Maurus, had offended so deeply against the laws of war that he could have no hope of pardon were he to capitulate. Instead of carrying on hostilities according to ordinary methods, he had behaved like a robber chief. Any party that ventured without sufficient strength near his fortress he would sally forth and attack; nor did he make any difference whether it was bent on a peaceable or warlike errand. Nor was he careful to inquire into its nationality, especially if it carried anything worth plundering. Any prisoners that he supposed or alleged to be English or Burgundians he used to hang on an elm that grew outside the walls and was called by his name.

In April the state of affairs in the town grew desperate. An attempt at relief made by the Dauphin had failed, ending in the capture of the leader who commanded it. The first proceeding of the besieged was to abandon the main part of the town, and concentrate their force in what was called the market-place, which was separated from the rest of the city by the river. The attempt of the townspeople to remove their property to this stronghold was interrupted by a sudden attack from the besiegers, but the garrison made good their escape into it.

Henry proceeded to attack this stronghold. He began by occupying a small island in the river, from which he kept up a vigorous attack with several siege-cannon and catapults. An important position was lost to the besieged by the capture of the mill, and a breach was made in the wall. Before ordering an assault Henry summoned the garrison to surrender. This summons the besieged met with an insulting answer, which they followed up by a successful sally, killing the whole of a party which they surprised in a meadow under the walls.

Orders were now given for a general and immediate assault. For seven or eight hours the conflict raged fiercely. So obstinate was the courage of the besieged, that when their lances were broken they defended themselves with iron spits, and night fell before an entrance could be effected. At one time the storming party had gained the ditch, but they were driven out of it again.

Further resistance, however, was hopeless. The walls lay in ruins, and another assault could hardly be

repulsed. Henry again offered terms. He had been personally insulted during the siege, but this did not affect his temper, which indeed was remarkably imperturbable, either by pity or anger. The terms offered and accepted were not more severe than the military practice of the time permitted. Four persons, among whom was the Bastard of Maurus, with all English, Scotch, and Irish soldiers, were excepted from the King's clemency: the rest of the captives were to be kept close prisoners till the close of the war. On May 11th Meaux was given into the King's hands. The Bastard of Maurus was beheaded, and his body hanged on the tree which he had made notorious by his cruelty. The other excepted prisoners were taken to Paris, and executed after due trial. We do not hear of any other severities.

The capture of this town was Henry's last exploit.

CHAPTER XVII

THE DEATH OF HENRY

On May 21st Queen Katherine landed at Harfleur with her infant son. She was accompanied by a brilliant court, and by the Duke of Bedford, who had been summoned to join his brother, now feeling, we may suppose, a pressing need of the assistance of his military skill. The Queen journeyed from Harfleur on to Rouen, and from Rouen to Vincennes, where Henry met her. Their entry into Paris was magnificent. It was noticed that the English queen had two mantles of ermine borne before her carriages, to mark, it was supposed, her dignity as Queen of England and France. Charles was at that time also in Paris, and it was again noticed that it was the English court rather than the French that formed the centre of attraction. Meanwhile Henry was winning good opinion from the commonalty by his just and moderate government, and especially by his exact and impartial administration of justice, a new thing in a country where privilege was always so powerful. On June 22nd Henry and his Queen left Paris for Senlis. He was soon again in the capital to inquire into the circumstances of a plot which had been discovered for the delivery of the city into the hands of the

Dauphin; and it was after his second return to Senlis that his health began manifestly to fail. Of the nature of his illness we are not exactly informed. Monstrelet says that it was St. Anthony's fire or erysipelas; other accounts speak of a fistula and pleurisy; in Walsingham the cause of death is given as "a sharp fever with vehement dysentery." Henry did not come of a long-lived race. His great-grandfather indeed reached an age (sixty-five) which, though often since exceeded, had only once before been reached by an English king; but his grandfather—the "time-honoured Lancaster" of Shakespeare—had died, worn out, at fifty-eight; his father, after years of suffering, expired at forty-seven; and his mother died in her twenty-fifth year.

Cosne-sur-Loire, a walled city belonging to the Duke of Burgundy, had been besieged by the Dauphin, and had agreed to capitulate unless relieved before August 6th. The Duke sent for help to Flanders and Picardy, and, of course, to King Henry. The King replied that he would come in person, and bring his whole army with him. The army marched out of its quarters in Paris and its environs, and Henry, after taking leave of his wife, whom indeed he never saw again, started from Senlis to join it. He was able to ride as far as Melun, where he exchanged the saddle for a litter, intending to overtake the army; but his illness increased so rapidly that he was compelled to give up his purpose. He handed over the command to the Duke of Bedford, and was carried to the Bois de Vincennes. There he took to his bed, from which he never rose again.

He seems to have been aware that his days were numbered. The Dukes of Bedford and Exeter, the Earl

of Warwick, and some four or five more of his most trusted counsellors were called to his bedside. To his brother John he said: "My good brother, I beseech you, on the loyalty and love you have ever expressed for me, that you show the same loyalty and affection to my son Henry, your nephew." He then gave him directions as to the policy he was to pursue. Monstrelet professes to give the dying man's exact words, but at this point they are obscure and even contradictory. The Duke of Burgundy was to have the Regency of France, if he wished for it; otherwise his brother was to take it himself. Then, turning to his uncle, he said: "My good uncle of Exeter, I nominate you sole Regent of the kingdom of England, for that you well know how to govern it; and I likewise nominate you as guardian to my son; and I insist, on your love to me, that very often you personally visit and see him." To the Earl of Warwick his words were: "My dear cousin of Warwick, I will that you be his governor, and that you teach him all things becoming his rank, for I cannot provide a fitter person for the purpose."

Then followed some advice as to the management of affairs. Above all things, dissension with the Duke of Burgundy must be avoided; and this was especially impressed on his brother Humphrey, whose relations with the Duke were not friendly. Unless they could keep on good terms with him, everything would be ruined. The princes of the French royal family whom they had in custody were on no account to be released.

After an interview with Sir Hugh de Lannoy, who had come to him on a mission from the Duke of Burgundy, Henry began to prepare for his end. He

sent for his physicians, and asked them how long they thought he had to live. They were naturally unwilling to tell him the truth, and endeavoured to evade the question: "It depended solely," they said, "on the will of God whether he should be restored to health." The King, dissatisfied with this answer, repeated his question, and commanded them to tell him the actual truth. They consulted together. Then one of them, whom they had appointed their spokesman, fell on his knees by the bedside and said: "Sire, you must think on your soul; for, unless it be the will of God to decree otherwise, it is impossible that you should live more than two hours."

On hearing this, Henry sent for his confessor. He made his confession, and received the last sacraments of the Church. He then bade his chaplains recite the seven penitential Psalms. When in chanting the fifty-first they came to the words "Build Thou the walls of Jerusalem," he interrupted them and said aloud that he had fully intended, after wholly subduing the realm of France and restoring it to peace, to conquer the kingdom of Jerusalem. The priests went on with their devotions. In the midst of them he cried out again, as if addressing some invisible adversary, "Thou liest, thou liest; my part is with the Lord Jesus"; then with a still louder voice, "*In manus tuas, Domine*"—and so breathed his last. The day of his death was the last day of August. He had just completed his thirty-fourth year.

The body was embalmed and placed in a coffin of lead. From Vincennes it was first taken in great pomp, attended by the English princes, his household, and a

multitude of the people, to the Church of Notre-Dame in Paris, where a solemn service was performed over it. From Paris it was removed with the same state to Rouen.

At Rouen, Queen Katherine, who had been kept in ignorance of her husband's perilous condition, waited with the corpse till affairs were sufficiently settled to allow of the return of the princes to England. This was not for some weeks, and it must have been about the beginning of November when the funeral procession set out. The route was through Abbeville, Hesdin, Montreuil, and Boulogne to Calais.

The coffin was placed on a car drawn by four magnificent horses. Above it was an effigy of the King, worked in leather, beautifully painted, with a crown of gold upon the head. The right hand held a sceptre; the left a golden ball; the face looked up to the heavens. The effigy lay on a mattress, on which was a coverlet of vermilion silk interwoven with beaten gold. When it passed through any town a canopy of silk, like that which is borne over the Host on Corpus Christi Day, was carried over it by men of rank. The King of Scots followed as chief mourner; with him were Henry's kinsmen, the English nobles in France, and the officers of his household; at the distance of a league behind followed the Queen with her ladies. The first halt was at the Church of St. Wolfran in Abbeville; there the coffin rested awhile, while rows of priests on either side chanted requiems unceasingly day and night. In every town through which the procession passed, masses were daily said from break of day to noon for the dead man's soul.

From Calais the body was transported to Dover. From Dover it was carried through Canterbury and Rochester to London, which was reached on Martinmas Day (November 11th). As it approached the city it was met by fifteen bishops clad in their episcopal robes, a number of mitred abbots and other dignified ecclesiastics, and a vast multitude of people of all ranks. The service for the dead was chanted as the car passed over London Bridge, down Lombard Street, to St. Paul's Cathedral. The adornment of the horses which drew it was notably significant. On the collar of the first were emblazoned the ancient arms of England; on that of the second, the arms of France and England quartered—these the late King had borne in his lifetime, as a solemn claim to the double crown; the third showed the arms of France simply; the fourth the traditionary bearings of the invincible Arthur—for, like him, Henry had never been vanquished in the field—three crowns *or* on a field *azure*. After a great service in St. Paul's the body was transferred to its final resting-place in Westminster. Preparations on a scale and of a kind such as had never before been thought of were there made for its reception. The relics hitherto preserved at the extreme eastern end of the Confessor's Chapel were removed from their place, to make room for the body of the great King. Over the spot was raised a chantry, where masses were to be offered up for ever for his soul, and an altar built in honour of the Annunciation. For a year thirty poor persons were to recite there the Psalter of the Virgin, adding to it in English the words, "Mother of God, remember thy servant Henry, who putteth his whole trust in thee!"

The masses have long since ceased to be said; but the chapel with its elaborate sculptures still remains to show the reverence in which the pious soldier was held —reverence such, writes Monstrelet, "as if it were certain he was a saint in Paradise." The shape of the chapel is that of the first letter of his name. Among the statues which adorn it are those of St. George of England and St. Denis of France, the two kingdoms which for a time at least he had united; and the sculptures represent the scenes of his life, his coronation, and his victories in France. The shield and the helmet that are still to be seen above the tomb belong indeed to Henry's time, but are not, as they have been represented to be, his actual arms, having been furnished by the undertaker as part of the funeral equipment. On the tomb below may still be seen the image of the King, but sadly stripped of its ancient splendour. For the leather effigy which was carried from Rouen to London was substituted, as a more permanent memorial, a figure cut out of heart of oak, covered with silver-gilt and with a head of solid silver. These ornaments were too tempting for the cupidity of some of his degenerate countrymen. *Sepulchrum modicum et mansurum* is the terse phrase of Tacitus, but Henry's tomb did not fulfil the condition. Two teeth of gold were carried off in the reign of Edward the Fourth, and the silver was stolen at the time of the Dissolution. Had it been wrought of humbler stone or alabaster, it might not have been the headless effigy which stirred the wrath of Addison, and still rebukes us with the thought of to what meanness humanity can descend.

The author of the curious *Versus Rhythmici de*

Henrico Quinto has given us an elaborate description of the King's personal appearance. The name of this writer is unknown, but it is clear from many of the expressions that he uses that he was a Westminster monk who held some office in the royal household. Henry's head, he tells us, was spherical, his forehead smooth (*planus*), an epithet which may possibly mean not receding. These two characteristics were, in his view, signs of intelligence; whether he is right or wrong in his generalisation, we may gather that Henry had an intelligent aspect. His hair was brown, thick, and smooth: here the writer uses again the epithet *plani*, for want, it would seem, of a more convenient word; he was moving, it should be said, in the very cramping fetters of Leonine verse. His nose was straight, and his face long (*extensus*): he had, that is, the oval face so characteristic of the great Englishmen of a later age, the golden time of Elizabeth. His complexion was bright (*floridus* is the word used, but "florid" would give a false impression): his eyes clear and brilliant, opening wide, with a reddish tinge in them (if this is the true translation of *subrufe patentes*); they were the eyes of a dove when he was not provoked, of a lion when he was stirred with anger. His teeth were white as snow and evenly set; his ears small and well shaped; his chin divided (*fissum*, meaning that it had a noticeable indentation); his neck of a becoming thickness, and fair; his cheeks flat (*non inflatæ* is the phrase, meaning that they were not "puffy," as were the cheeks of Henry the Eighth) and of a good colour, and his lips of a vermilion hue. His limbs were strongly and handsomely formed, with bones and

sinews firmly knit together. The chronicler Hall gives a description which is substantially the same: "He was of stature more than the common sort, of body lean, well-membered and strongly made, a face beautiful, somewhat long-necked, black haired." Black as the colour of his hair is doubtless a mistake for brown, the epithet used by the contemporary chronicler.

The author of this description goes on to relate the royal virtues. Henry was regular in his attendance at mass, which he heard in his private closet, diligently abstracting his mind at the time from worldly cares. He made weekly confession. He was moderate in food and drink, liberal in almsgiving, regular in his fasts. His mood varied between liveliness and gravity (*morosus*). He was diligent in the administration of justice, specially ready to help the cause of the widow, prompt to put down abuses, "often reading books he surrenders himself to an honourable occupation; and," goes on the writer with an abrupt transition, "as a bold archer he avoids inaction; therefore he is not fleshy, nor burdened with corpulence, but a handsome man, never weary, whether he be on horseback or on foot." Elsewhere, too, he speaks of the King's fondness for hunting, fowling, and fishing, and of his activity as a walker and rider, characteristics which follow his praises as "one who was not given to vice or gluttony." There can be no doubt that, at least from the time when his father's death brought home to him the responsibilities of power, he emphatically deserved the praise of purity of life.

The devotional aspect of his character has been spoken of more than once in these pages. It would be unjust to doubt the sincerity of his piety because many of his

acts seem inconsistent with our own conceptions of the character which piety should produce. It was not the less genuine in him because it did not make him tender-hearted or philanthropic, because he pursued his great scheme of conquest without scruple, without remorse, without a thought for the blood which he was shedding, or for the desolation which he was causing. His religion made him what few kings have been, temperate and chaste. It did not make him merciful; it would not be too much to say that in Henry's age it made no man merciful. We must compare it, not with the religion of a Havelock or a Gordon, but with the grovelling superstition of a Lewis the Eleventh. It would certainly be more just to charge him with fanaticism than with hypocrisy. He seems to have looked upon his wars for the acquisition of the French crown as a devout prince two centuries before might have looked upon a crusade. It was his mission to recover what he seems, difficult as it is to believe it, to have sincerely regarded as his rightful inheritance. By one of those processes of self-deception that are so difficult to imagine of others, so easy to perform for ourselves, he had persuaded himself of the soundness of a title which seems to us to need no refutation; and all his candid, his almost audacious confidence, his unhesitating rejection of compromises, as well as the earnestness of his prayers and thanksgivings for victory, indicate a profound conviction that he was doing a work to which he had been divinely sent. If we are to compare him with the famous conquerors of the world, we should find his parallel in Alexander, convinced that it was his mission to take the vengeance of force for centuries of Persian wrong, rather than in

Napoleon, whose faith did not go beyond a conviction of the power of his big battalions.

Of Henry's qualities as a military leader it is impossible to speak too highly. The one possible exception where he may be thought to have failed, not indeed in skill, but in prudence, was the march from Harfleur to Calais. Yet it was a piece of calculated audacity abundantly justified by the result. To have gone back from Harfleur with nothing to show for a wasted army but a single seaport, would have discredited him both at home and abroad. He had to make an impressive display of his superiority if he was to be accepted as the future conqueror of France. His career after this was one of unbroken success—success earned by courage, foresight, tactical skill, fertility of resource, economy of strength, in short, by all the qualities of a great captain. There is no more conclusive proof of his greatness than the instantaneous change which his presence wrought in the prospects of a campaign: *Ipso adventu profligata bella.*

Of his qualities as a ruler it is difficult to speak. It would be unjust to compare him with Richard Cœur de Lion, and speak of him as a great soldier and nothing more. On the other hand, we do not find in him—we have indeed no opportunity of finding in him—the great legislative power of Edward the First. But he was not unmindful of his duties as a king, and in the midst of his campaigns he found time for the cares of civil government. England never had a more popular sovereign, though he made demands upon it in men and money which, considering the shortness of his reign, must have exceeded all precedent;

and even in the country which he ruled as a stranger he won a general admiration and respect.

It should not affect our estimate of his greatness that we now see his schemes of conquest to have been chimerical, his purpose of uniting the crowns of England and France an impossible dream. He must have himself found it to be so had he lived. When thirty years had passed, after an enormous expenditure of blood and treasure, nothing was left of his French conquests. But he had come nearer than any who had gone before him to the accomplishment of the great hope of his predecessors. He died in Paris, the "Heir of France."

THE END

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